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ABSTRACT

This publication examines the situations in which school-based management has worked and, conversely, those in which it failed to meet expectations. It attempts to identify exactly what school-based management (SBM) is and what it is not. Information was obtained from interviews with researchers and practitioners, a review of literature, and a 1993 survey of administrators. Section 1 offers a definition of SBM, identifies criteria for making it work, and describes the historical and global contexts in which collaborative work environments develop. Section 2 illustrates how SBM is being implemented in eight different schools--successfully and unsuccessfully--and reviews both common barriers and gains. The third section offers a sampling of thoughts, tips, and strategies as they relate to the personal, interpersonal, managerial, and organizational issues necessary for effective implementation of SBM. The final section summarizes some of the major issues raised: (1) SBM is about embracing a new mindset; (2) authentic and effective SBM results from negotiating certain trends and issues as they apply to specific settings and situations; (3) there is no one model or best way; (4) eight criteria for determining school readiness for SBM include commitment, attitude, purpose, action, leadership, readiness, character, and steadfastness; (5) SBM may not be appropriate in some situations; (6) SBM has a rich heritage; and (7) SBM could result in changing the status quo. Contains 84 references. (LMI)

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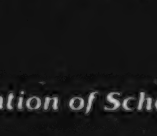
Site-Based Management & Decision Making



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The AASA Critical Issues Series

Site-based management, in one form or another, is finding its way into many of the nation's school districts, sometimes by mandate and sometimes by choice. But while it has been touted by many as a key to the reform efforts of the 1990s, SBM is one of the most misunderstood concepts in the history of education.

Although hailed as the true American way— government by the people, for the people— site-based management has in many cases failed to live up to its promise of improving schooling. Is there something intrinsically flawed with the approach or just with its application?

This Critical Issues Report sifts through the triumphs and tragedies that have carried the banner of site-based management and looks closely behind the slogans. It attempts to answer the questions: What exactly *is* site-based management? More important, what isn't? By any name — and site-based management has a dozen aliases— it will not succeed without a commitment from everyone— from school board to superintendent to principal to teacher to student to parent — to rethink their roles and their responsibilities. This book offers a host of guidelines and insights to help them do just that.

This report was written by Linda Chion-Kenney, a free-lance education writer living in Valrico, Florida. It was edited by Donald L. Hymes, editor/manager of the AASA critical Issues Series. AASA Publications Manager Leslie Eckard provided editing assistance, and free-lance editor Georgianna Havill conducted additional interviews. Special thanks go to the hundreds of educators who responded to the survey for this book, and to the many researchers and practitioners whose expertise helped the author along the way in her quest for the essential components of authentic site-based management.

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Critical Issues Report No. 28

Site-Based Management and Decision Making

Problems and Solutions

By Linda Chion-Kenney

Edited by Donald L.Hymes

American Association of School Administrators

Contents

Introduction IV

Section 1: Site-Based Management 1

Section Highlights 1

Site-Based Management: What is It? 2
Why Site-Based Management? 2
The Scope of Site-Based Management 3
Coming to Terms with Site-Based Management 4
The Promise and the Quandary 5
Barriers to Reform 6
Survey Cites Barriers, Gains 7
Accountability and Professionalism 9
What About the Students? 12
Authentic SBM: An Eight-Point Test 16
The Historical, Global Context 18
Venturing Beyond Industrialism 20
Reinventing and Reconnecting 20
Site-Based Management and Choice 22
In Conclusion 24

Sidebars

What About Rewards? 5
Unfulfilled Promises, Burdensome Barriers 8
AASA Survey Findings 10
SBM: Defining Through Terminology 11
SBM and NASDC: Break-the-Mold Schools 13
SBM and the Classroom Connection 25
SBM and TQM: The Quality Connection 26

Section 2: Site-Based Management in Practice 29

Section Highlights 29

Scene One: Authentic SBM: Adults and Students Rethink Teaching and Learning 30
Scene Two: A Practice in Name Only Hardens Egos, Creates Conflict 31
Scene Three: The Good, the Bad, and the Typical: Giving Authority with the Reins Held Tight 34
Scene Four: For the People, by the People: the 'Miracle' in East Harlem 35
Scene Five: Townsfolk at Town Meetings Help Shape a School's Vision 37
Scene Six: A Superintendent Involves Staff To Heal Hostilities 38
Scene Seven: A District's Focus on Power Relations Runs Out of Time, Commitment 42
Scene Eight: Collaborative Work Environments Driven By the Needs of Children 43
In Conclusion 44

Sidebars

The Lincoln Plan 32
Local School Councils: Critical Role, Critical Issues 36
SBM in Five School Districts 39
Waialae, Hawaii, Elementary School 45
Henderson County Schools: Mission, Goals, Principles, and Beliefs 47

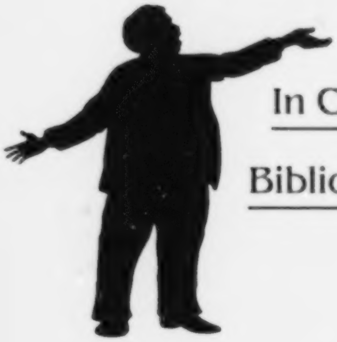
Section 3: Conditions for Success 51

Section Highlights 51

Mindsets 52
Climate 54
Empowerment 55
Leadership 56
Organization 57
Vision 58
Implementation 59
Reorientation 60
Reinvention 61
Renewal 62
Reconceptualization 64
Preparedness 70
Accountability 71
The View from Washington 73
In Conclusion 75

Sidebars

Getting Down to Business: The Logistics of SBM 66
A Test for SBM 66
Leadership for Restructuring Schools 67
Managing Transitions: 'Getting Them Through the Wilderness' 76
A Business-School Partnership: The JCPenney High Performance Schools Project 77



In Closing . . . 79

Bibliography 81

Introduction

Site-based management is putting the decisions at the building level. It is about bringing those closest to the decisions being made into the process of making them.

Writing a book about site-based management is much like writing a book about school restructuring; both topics involve a myriad of sub-topics that are about the business of education itself, from purpose to teaching and learning outcomes.

At its most basic level, site-based management, in the words of National Education Association President Keith Geiger, is "putting the decisions at the building level." It is about bringing those closest to the decisions being made into the process of making them.

But site-based management is much more, too. It is about changing the organizational and instructional systems of schools and districts by focusing on unique schoolhouse talents and specific student needs. It is about strategic planning, management, leadership, teaching, learning, staff development, budgeting, school climate, school culture, accountability, and parental and community involvement.

And site-based management also is about inner convictions and relationships. The issue is trust and character, and it is not secondary.

Most importantly, site-based management is about modeling for young people the very leadership, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills we say they will need to be prosperous workers, citizens, and family members in their lives outside of school. It is democracy in action.

One observer has noted that site-based management is "everywhere, but nowhere." As one of the most widely adopted reform initiatives of the 1980s and 1990s, site-based management needs to be reviewed beyond its tired slogans to its utility in school renewal.

This book, then, establishes a marketplace of ideas from a wide variety of sources. Essentially, it is a "backgrounder" that provides a closer look at collaborative work environments for people looking to launch or to advance a site-based management or decision-making effort.

Sources

Information for this book was culled from a wide variety of sources, including interviews with researchers and practitioners and more than a hundred studies, reports, monographs, books, and research presentations. Findings from a survey of school administrators on site-based management conducted for this book are included. The survey was conducted by the American Association of School Administrators in 1993.

The Organization of This Book

This book is broken down into three main sections.

- **Section One** offers a definition of site-based management, criteria for making it work, and the historical and global context in which collaborative work environments take root and grow.
- **Section Two** illustrates how the effort is being implemented in certain setting — successfully and unsuccessfully — and reviews both common barriers and gains.
- **Section Three** offers a sampling of thoughts, tips, and strategies as they relate to the personal, interpersonal, managerial, and organizational issues needed to make site-based management work.

In preparing this book, it became obvious that many districts have been working hard to provide decision-making teams with packets of information on site-based management. Educators may want to consider including materials from the comprehensive bibliography at the end of this book.

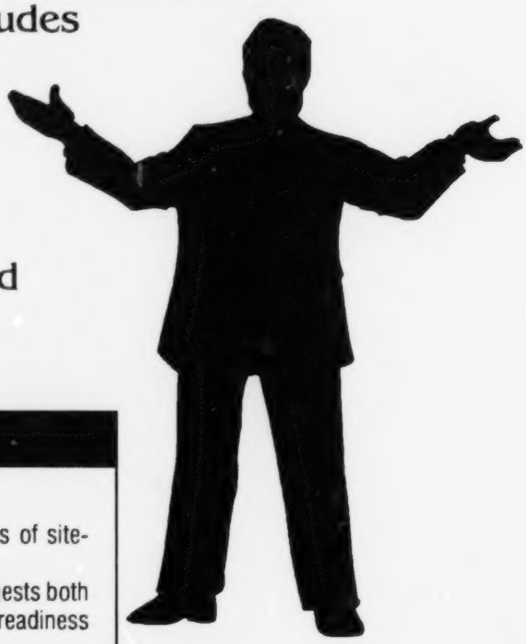
Highlights

Of particular significance is the eight-point test of authentic site-based management in Section One. These criteria suggest a starting point for defining site-based management and for determining readiness to take on more decision-making responsibility at the site level. These points — the prerequisites for success — should be referred to often in the design and implementation of participatory management and decision-making structures as a way to stay grounded in the purpose and function of democratic governance.

Section 1

Site-Based Management in Review

This section presents a conceptual overview of site-based management, introducing for discussion the many definitions, promises, barriers, gains, criticisms, and needs inherent in collaborative work environments. It concludes with a discussion of the historical and global context in which today's decentralization efforts take root and grow, and calls for schools to model those skills students are told they will need to live more full and productive lives.



Section Highlights

- **The Promise and the Quandary.** A listing of the essential questions of site-based management.
- **Authentic SBM: an Eight-Point Test.** A review of the research that suggests both a starting point for defining site-based management and for determining readiness to take on more decision-making responsibility at the site level.

Site-Based Management: What Is It?

Site-based management (SBM) is on the nation's reform agenda, in some school districts as an initiative of choice and in others as a mandate. While it is sometimes heralded as the latest panacea and sometimes denounced as a first step toward anarchy it also is seen as a philosophy of governance deeply rooted in democratic principles.

Site-based management is government by the people, for the people. It is an organizational philosophy that says the people who work most closely with children should be the ones who make the critical decisions governing not only how a school is run, but also what a student learns, how, and in which time frames and settings.

Different Names, Same Goals

We are calling it site-based management in this book, but it goes by many names: school-based management, school-based improvement, building-based management, school-improvement process, teacher empowerment, administrative decentralization, and/or shared decision making. But whatever its label, true site-based management systems operate with a number of common beliefs:

- Decisions should be made at the lowest possible level.
- Those responsible for implementing decisions should have a voice in determining those decisions.
- Teachers must play an important role in making decisions that affect the children they teach.
- Schools can make more efficient use of limited resources when spending decisions are made at the school level.
- Parents and community members have an important role in the educational process.
- Change will be more effective and more lasting if those who carry out the changes feel a sense of ownership in the process.

Who Decides What?

Clearly, even a full-scale system of site-based management will not eliminate the need for a superintendent and a school board. The following are examples of matters best decided at the district level:

- Revenue and budget.
- Instructional objectives and the curriculum to meet them.
- Promotion and graduation standards.
- Personnel policies — often including collective bargaining.
- Site selection and building construction.
- Centralized purchasing, warehousing, and transportation.
- Student assessment.

Within each school, however, the focus is primarily on the students. Here are some examples of where decision-making authority would likely be found at the local level:

- Assessing the educational needs of the students and determining the school's priorities.
- Determining staffing patterns to address student needs.
- Setting budget priorities to enable the school to meet the district's educational objectives.
- Developing instructional techniques that will most effectively help the students meet the district's curriculum objectives.
- Determining the best use of space within the building.
- Selecting instructional materials most appropriate to the students' needs.
- Hiring staff members for specific vacancies.
- Developing programs to involve parents and other community members in school activities.

Why Site-Based Management?

Site-based management is many different things to many different people, but school districts usually adopt it for specific reasons. A task force convened by three leading organizations of school administrators identified a number of advantages in 1990 in its booklet, *School-Based Management: A Strategy for Better Living.*

The task force, representing the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, found that site-based management:

- Formally recognizes the expertise and competence of those who work in individual schools to make decisions to improve learning.
- Gives teachers, other staff members, and the community increased input into decisions.
- Improves morale of teachers because staff members see they can have an immediate impact on their environment.
- Shifts the emphasis in staff development. Teachers are more directly involved in determining what they need.
- Focuses accountability for decisions. One individual, typically the superintendent or a building principal, has ultimate responsibility for any decision.
- Brings both financial and instructional resources in line with the instructional goals developed in each school.
- Helps to provide better services and programs to students.
- Nurtures and stimulates new leaders at all levels. As one task force member said, "Superstars emerge from the process. There is a rebirth."
- Increases both the quantity and the quality of communication, which is more likely to be informal in face-to-face meetings, for example.

Other benefits cited were that increased communication among principals and between the superintendent and principals would lead to a cross-sharing of exemplary programs, and that districtwide decisions would more likely reflect the needs of individual schools. Finally, staff, parents, and students would feel a greater ownership in their schools.

The Scope of Site-Based Management

A 1993 *Education Week* article credits site-based management — giving greater decision-making authority to individual schools — and shared or collaborative decision-making — dispersing it more widely within schools — as two of the most widely adopted reform tools of the 1980s and 1990s. It has been endorsed by such varied groups as the National Governors Association, the Business Roundtable, the National Education Association, and the American Federation of Teachers.

Researchers have noted that while perhaps thousands of districts across the country have experimented with site-based management in some form, the number that have formally embraced it is far smaller. The *Education Week* article noted that at least five states — Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Texas — "have mandated some form of participatory decision making at every school, and hundreds of districts in other states claim to be engaged in the process."

Increased communication among principals and between the superintendent and principals would lead to a cross-sharing of exemplary programs, and district-wide decisions would more likely reflect the needs of individual schools.

In a paper that examines the process by which school-based management was developed and promoted as a contemporary reform initiative, researcher Rodney T. Ogawa of the University of California at Riverside credits "a relatively small set of actors" with shaping and promoting the movement in the national arena.

These actors, Ogawa added, "wove together threads of past and existing reform initiatives, a long history of school-based management programs, the effective schools movement, concern over the school-business relationship, and state-level reform policies to weave the cloth of a movement to restructure American public education, beginning in the late 1980s."

Cited as the two most important actors were the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy and the National Governors Association, both of which in 1986 released landmark reports, "A Nation Prepared" and "Time for Results." These documents endorsed giving greater flexibility, discretion, and autonomy to individual schools. Following these reports, Ogawa noted, articles and workshops on the subject increased dramatically, and many school districts launched school-based management plans, most notably Dade County, Florida, and Rochester, New York.

Coming to Terms with Site-Based Management

In Hawaii, they call site-based management School/Community-Based Management, or SCBM, to stress the mandate for involving parents and other community members in key decisions affecting their schools.

A Colorado district prefers to call it Site-Based Decision Making to emphasize that the management of schools, "an administrative function," should *not* be taken away from the principals and other administrators and turned over to teachers, staff, and community members.

Meanwhile, a Minnesota district allows its teachers to run a school without a principal, calling its venture in site-based decision making Staff Helping Administer Responsible Education, or SHARE.

The beat goes on. Kentucky law dictates that by the 1996-97 school year, all schools will be run by teams of lay people, educators, and administrators making key decisions together. In Chicago, legislation disbanded school boards and gave parents and community members the upper hand on local school councils with the authority to hire and fire principals and approve school budgets and plans.

In the Eye of the Beholder

Still, what's in a name? The AASA survey on site-based management conducted for this report shows that some school leaders believe they are practicing site-based management because they work with appointed department heads, faculty senates, or teachers-only advisory committees from whom they receive advice but are not bound by it. One district defined its SBM as using advisory school boards for each school, but they are still subject to the dictates of the districtwide school board.

To further confuse the issue, many schools throughout the nation have joined reform networks that embrace a wide range of principles, such as Henry Levin's Accelerated Schools and Theodore R. Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools. These and other models of reform — such as those based on the quality management, outcome-based education, and effective schools movements — do not necessarily fly the banner of site-based management. Nevertheless, none of them could work without a culture of collegiality that expects those closest to the students to work collaboratively in making the key decisions concerning what is taught, how, when, and where.

Decentralization, then, whether it involves shifting authority from the statehouse to the schoolhouse, from the board room to the classroom, from the principal's office to the teachers' lounge, from professional circles to community councils, or some combination of them all, requires a structured relationship between two key concepts: site-based management — who runs the school — and shared decision making — who shapes the ideas that guide the school.

The Purpose and the Premise

In its simplest terms, school-site management is, as defined by Sizer, the "deliberate delegation of administrative power to individual schools." Its complexity comes from shedding layers, eliminating uniformity, deregulating, and relaxing bureaucratic strangleholds. As such, it is often talked about in the same breath as teacher empowerment, facilitative leadership, parent and community involvement, and student engagement — all of which, if taken seriously, entail a critical rethinking of traditional power structures and allegiances.

The purpose of site-based management, said Betty Malen of the University of Washington, is "to focus on the school as the unit of change; decentralize decision making; involve professionals, patrons, and others in decisions; encourage self-study; and support innovation."

SBM rests on the belief that the best decisions are those that involve the people at the level closest to the decision being addressed. As explained in *School-Based Management: A Strategy for Better Living,* "When school-based management is working well, more decisions flow *up* through the system than *down* from the top."

That is another way of saying that the purpose of SBM is to see the school as the *center of change* and not the *target of change.* As Roland Barth, founder of The Principals' Center at Harvard University, put it, "We need to unlock the very deeply concealed and yet very powerful and exciting visions that school practitioners carry around with them. This needs to inform the restructuring of schools."

This view supports the contention that site-based management is the means through which reformation becomes transformation, through which ownership is spread more evenly throughout the organization to rest in the hands of those closest to students and their learning, workers and their environments, organizations and their cultures.

Also spread more evenly is accountability and responsibility for decisions made, actions taken, money spent, and results achieved. As the argument goes, if schools are to be held accountable for student achievement, it is only fair they be given the resources and responsibility to determine how they operate.

The Promise and the Quandary

The promise of site-based management is to create successful schools that educate students better without regard to hierarchical status. With the promise, though, comes the quandary. This book attempts to answer these and other questions:

- Can public schools expect to achieve using what has been called in the private sector "high-involvement management"?
- Even if they could bring about achievement, is this the missing link both to comprehensive, systemic reform and to better student outcomes?
- Are these even the measures against which site-based management should be judged?
- What are the characteristics of an effective model? What does it look like? Why does it work in one place but not in another? Is it worth the cost? And what "site-based management" are we talking about?

The Challenge and the Opportunity

Priscilla Wohlstetter and Susan Albers Mohrman, writing for the Consortium for Policy Research in Education in 1993, noted that in studies of decentralization in the private sector, high-involvement management is recommended as most appropriate in organizations where the work:

- Is complex.
- Is best done collegially or in teams.
- Involves uncertainty in its day-to-day tasks.
- Exists in a rapidly changing environment.

What About Rewards?

Employee compensation has been called the "stealth issue" in decentralization because as important as it is, hardly anyone seems to be addressing it.

Priscilla Wohlstetter and Susan Albers Mohrman of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, studied decentralization in the private sector as it might affect school-based management and concluded, "Translating decentralized reward structures of business to education is probably the greatest challenge to SBM."

In decentralized private organizations, they said, employees are rewarded for the knowledge and skills they possess. "In education," they added, "reward systems tend to use indirect, proxy measures of knowledge and skills, namely the years of education and experience a teacher has accumulated."

They differentiated between *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* rewards, both of which are important. Extrinsic rewards, they point out, do not have to be monetary. They can include such things as sabbaticals, mentor teacher positions, and opportunities to pursue full-time studies or to further their education through professional conferences, university classes, or teacher networks. Intrinsic rewards include such things as achieving success with students and enjoying collaborative work with peers.

The promise of site-based management is to create successful schools that educate students better without regard to hierarchical status.

While these closely fit the description of teaching, can public schools expect to achieve high-involvement work structures, and are such structures worth the effort? As Martin Carnoy, a professor of education and economics at Stanford University, sees it:

> The discussion on how to improve schools has inevitably come to focus on management and organization, with a wide range of decentralization (or 'restructuring') schemes at center stage. The major issues are whether any of these decentralization proposals can make a difference in educational quality and whether successful decentralization and improvement can be achieved through the present public school system.

Some teachers and principals continue to look for the 'magic bullet' that will solve all of their problems in one fell swoop; some value the status quo and see no need for fundamental change; still others have simply given up.

— Richard A. Rosmiller

Barriers to Reform

A review of research shows several reasons why successful decentralization, while a promising opportunity, is a formidable challenge for public schools as they typically operate.

For one thing, support for reform usually comes with high expectations and tight time demands, and yet it takes five to seven years for most educational innovations to show results. Few educational innovations last long enough to determine whether or not they work.

A study of statewide reform efforts shows that even the best of them have a life expectancy of three to five years, if that long, if they lack community support. In too many cases, site-based management is seen as a *political* reform that transfers some power to school sites, but not enough to empower school staffs to make substantive changes that will have a lasting impact on student achievement.

A 1993 paper by Richard A. Rossmiller and Edie L. Holcomb noted that despite "the continuing press for reform, American schools have been remarkably resistant to systemic change." Some teachers and principals "continue to look for the 'magic bullet' that will solve all of their problems in one fell swoop; some value the status quo and see no need for fundamental change; still others have simply given up. A major obstacle to reform, however, appears to be a lack of the knowledge and skills needed to achieve lasting change in a school's culture," defined as "the accepted and customary ways that the work of the institution is carried out."

And finally, the political system, characterized by a segmented organizational structure, the emphasis on elections, policy overload, and specialization, "deliberately thwarts decisiveness and coordination . . . [It] attracts and rewards action, not restraint, and eagerness, not patience."

So wrote Susan H. Fuhrman in *Designing Coherent Education Policy,* in which Fuhrman, director of the policy center for the CPRE, further noted: "It is not surprising that education policy, like other policy areas, is characterized by magic bullets rather than comprehensive strategies."

Change and Human Nature

The underlying assumption in these points is that the change required to bring about effective site-based management is dependent on human nature; that before people can manage change, they have to accept change, and before they accept change, they have to understand it, value it, and connect it to what is or envisioned to be and this takes time.

For example, to develop a coordinated policy and a consensus about what students should know and be able to do, Fuhrman maintains that politicians, to whom the educational establishment must ultimately answer, would have to take a long-term perspective that allows time for policies to show effects before they are evaluated or changed.

But is such a scenario likely? Sizer, in his book, *Horace's School: Redesigning the American High School,* is both doubtful and hopeful. He places his faith in the power of the people most closely engaged with students to participate in what has been called "collective inquiry" or "reflective practice" — the habit of standing apart from one's work to examine it in a thoughtful way. To many people, this is the underlying assumption of site-based management:

> Will American political and educational leaders seriously rethink what their schools are and what they do? I remember that they have not, for a long time, and I worry that they will not, this being a day dominated by the politics of slogan and sound bite, of short-range gain, where the higher levels of government are searching to take ever greater control of the schools. I fear that the pre-

ferred alternative to careful rethinking will be continued pushing, prodding, testing, and protesting our largely mindless, egregiously expensive, and notably unproductive current system. It is not a pretty prospect. And yet there are glimmers of hope . . . Most important is a growing army of Horace Smiths, educators in the schools who are fed up with being relentlessly criticized and patronized, and at the same time ready to re-examine their own practices, their own ideas about learning, their own compromises . . . If we gain new schools, it will be because these individuals have found among themselves a fresh source of authority and have asserted in community after community a new order.

Time and Other Barriers

One thing everybody seems to understand about site-based management is just how much time it takes and how hard it is to reinvent a system of governance while still being expected to run a school and succeed with students under the old order.

The traditional education system is founded on the belief that "following orders takes little time," said union representative Michael R. Schoeppach and classroom teacher Debby Nissen, both of Bellevue, Washington, where, as a condition of employment, teachers have been expected to be involved in decisions that affect their professional lives.

With SBM, they added, the expectation "is that teachers will meet with one another and with parents and students, and will make significant decisions that will reform and transform their school and, ultimately, public education. When that expectation is superimposed on the existing time structure, one can easily predict that the model will fail."

Survey Cites Barriers, Gains

Selecting from a list of 38 possibilities, the 208 administrators who responded to the AASA survey on site-based management chose as the most significant barriers those dealing with time and energy and the uneasiness that comes with changing perspectives.

- More than half of the respondents (53 percent) said "time and energy" have been either a "crippling barrier" or a "manageable barrier," requiring either a "great deal" or a "good amount" of attention, respectively.
- Viewed as having been either a "crippling" or "manageable" barrier were: "resistance to new roles and relationships" (49 percent), "fear of change" (44 percent), "ingrained relationships" (43 percent), and "confusion over role" (41 percent).
- One in four respondents (26 percent) said "politics and power struggles" have been either a "crippling barrier" or "would definitely be a problem" if site-based management were to be undertaken.

. . . and the Benefits

Given the obstacles and barriers, why should school people invest great time, talent, effort, and belief into something that may not work, let alone even last as long as the superintendent's tenure? Working from a list of 23 items, school administrators most often selected those benefits that had to do with the quality of decisions and the decision making process itself.

- The results most often noted as having been "of great benefit" from site-based management or decentralization were: "broad-based representation in decision making" (33 percent); "better communication" (30 percent); "better quality staff development" (27 percent); "better decisions are made" (26 percent); "improved teacher morale" (25 percent); and "sharing of ideas and strategies across disciplines, schools, and districts" (24 percent).
- Those items least cited as having been "of great benefit" were: "improved student achievement" (6 percent), "progress in areas such as student attendance, discipline and tardiness" (8 percent), and "better skills, behaviors, and attitudes modeled for students" (11 percent). Also rated in the bottom five were "greater number of applications for teacher openings" (5 percent) and "improved board/management relations" (8 percent).

In selecting benefits that have been "of great benefit" or that have "shown some promise" from site-based management or decentralization, the gap narrowed between

Unfulfilled Promises, Burdensome Barriers

"Site-based management in most instances does not achieve its stated objectives." So concluded researchers Betty Malen, Rodney T. Ogawa, and Jennifer Kranz in a report of findings based on a study for the University of Utah of nearly 200 documents "describing current and previous attempts to use SBM in the United States, Canada, and Australia."

In a 1990 article published in *The School Administrator,* the researchers noted that while the "evidence about the actual operation of site-based management plans is limited in several ways," (i.e., "there are only eight systematic studies of site-based management programs") the information available was, nevertheless, instructive.

Based on their observations, the researchers offered a checklist against which school communities can assess their own setbacks and successes.

Checklist of Barriers to Effective Site-Based Management

- Site participants rarely address central, salient policy issues in their school council or committee meetings.
- Councils tend to be, at least on demographic dimensions, relatively homogenous groups.
- Members tend to view participation in councils as an opportunity to acquire information and provide service, not an opportunity to redefine roles and make policy. Ingrained norms dictate that district officials and school administrators set policies, teachers deliver instruction, and parents provide support. Whereas site-based management plans grant participants the formal right to challenge and change this presumption, well-established norms nullify that option.
- Site-based management plans often are ambiguous and circumscribed by the need to keep council decisions consistent with existing policies. Participants, uncertain of the parameters of their formal power, are unconvinced they have been given greater power. They become skeptical and are inclined to accept roles that conform to traditional patterns.
- Sponsoring systems rarely infuse councils with critical resources, such as time; technical assistance; independent sources of information; continuous, norm-based training; or funds to assess current programs and to develop new programs.
- Initial, energizing effects of site-based management often are offset by factors such as the:
  - Time-consuming nature of the process.
  - Confusion, anxiety, and contention as site participants and district employees attempt to define their new roles.
  - Dissonance created as committee demands compete with teaching responsibilities.
  - Complexity of the problems site participants are supposed to solve.
  - Resentment generated if site participants perceive they have only modest influence on marginal matters.
  - Frustration produced by fiscal constraints.
- In most instances, site participants simply do not have the time, technical assistance, or logistical support to carry out the full range of planning activities in a substantive and coordinated fashion.
- Although site-based management precipitates a wide range of activities — such as student recognition programs, discipline policies, workshops, and newsletters — there is little evidence that it stimulates the development or enhances the implementation of major instructional changes.
- In some cases, district and/or state requirements are viewed as so extensive or confining that site participants focus more on compliance than on improvement.
- Student achievement does not appear to be either helped or hindered. Only two systematic studies examine the relationship between SBM and student achievement. While there are exceptions on both ends of the spectrum (a few schools improved and a few schools declined), these studies conclude that most schools maintain their previous level of performance.

items related to working conditions for adults and items related to student gains and greater community involvement. Still, items related to adults topped the rankings, although the desire to make schools better for students appears to be the driving force of decentralization initiatives.

- Sixty-six percent of the respondents said "broad-based representation in decision making" has been "of great benefit" or "has shown some promise" from site-based management or decentralization. Rounding out the top seven vote-getters were: "improved teacher morale" (57 percent), "better communication" (58 percent), "better decisions are made" (56 percent), "greater sense of professionalism" (52 percent), "a greater 'culture of collegiality' for staff" (52 percent), and "improved teacher status" (51 percent).
- Less than 1 percent said "improved student achievement" has been of great benefit. But another 31 percent selected that option as showing some promise. Likewise affected by a similar re-analysis of responses: "progress in areas such as student attendance, discipline and tardiness" (from 8 to 37 percent) and "better skills, behaviors, and attitudes modeled for students" (from 11 to 37 percent).
- While 52 percent selected "a greater 'culture of collegiality' for staff" as having been either of great benefit or some promise, 45 percent selected "a greater 'community of caring' for students."
- Forty-eight percent selected "better quality staff development" as having been either of great benefit or some promise. Forty-five percent selected "better services and programs for students."
- Only two of every 10 respondents said "greater parental and community involvement" has been "of great benefit" from site-based management or decentralization. But about twice that many (43 percent) reported that it has been either of great benefit or some promise.

Achievement Still the Goal

Based on responses to the AASA survey, it appears that while administrators don't expect quick fixes or dramatic gains in student achievement overnight, such improvement, for the most part, is what drives them.

- Forty percent of the respondents said they hoped "improved student achievement" would be a benefit of site-based management or decentralization.
- While less than 1 percent reported it "has been of great benefit," one in four respondents (26 percent) said the effort "has shown some promise" in leading to improved student achievement. Less than 1 percent said "most likely it won't be a benefit."
- Sixty-four percent of the respondents said they believed site-based management and decision making would have a positive effect on student achievement.
- Only three respondents said they believed it would have a negative effect; one in four took a neutral position.

Accountability and Professionalism

Actual and expected benefits reported in the literature of site-based management usually reflect two major themes: accountability and professionalism as they relate to organizational effectiveness and adult and student learning.

Accountability refers to making the system and its workers more responsive to student needs, civic responsibilities, community participation, and workplace demands.

"We're asking people to do something they've never done before, never had to do," said Billy Bruce, who retired from the superintendency in a Kentucky school district. "They always could say, 'We're failing because of parents, or the central office, or the board of education,' or something like this. But now they have to say, 'This is our decision, we make it, and we have to be able to answer for it.'"

As Charles T. Kerchner, professor of education and public policy at the Claremont Graduate School of the University of Washington, noted: "Site management joins the design and execution of the work. It starts to link responsibility and resources."

School-based management in the Fort Worth (Texas) Independent School District,

AASA Survey Findings

The American Association of School Administrators early in 1993 conducted a survey on site-based management and shared decision making for this Critical Issues Report. More than 200 surveys were returned, 121 from superintendents (58 percent) and 87 from principals (42 percent).

The survey was intended as a sampling of opinion on a wide range of issues related to decentralization. Not all respondents answered every question or ranked every selection. Nevertheless, percentages were based on the total response rate (208), unless otherwise noted.

Respondents ranged from those who have been working on comprehensive site-based management strategies for years to those who were just beginning or considering decentralization efforts to those with no plans to do so.

A Nationwide Reform

To begin the survey, respondents were asked to classify the status of site-based management. Three-quarters of the respondents said site-based management is taking or will take place in their school or district.

- Fifty-seven percent of the respondents said site-based management has occurred; another 17 percent said implementation will occur.
- Only 12 percent said they had "no plans to implement" site-based management. Thirteen percent reported "considering implementation."
- Of the 132 respondents who cited a date when site-based management began in their school and/or district, 61 percent reported that the initiative began some time in the 1990s.

Defining Site-Based Management

Administrators seem to believe that site-based management is about stirring up the pot but not necessarily about pouring out the contents and working with a new recipe.

- Almost two-thirds (62 percent) classified site-based management as "an exercise in collegiality and teamwork aimed at enabling school-based staff to have a greater say in how their schools are run."
- Less than 5 percent (or 10 respondents) said they viewed site-based management as "a truly radical reform of the governance and organization structure, shifting power and accountability from the managers to the managed, from the central office to the school."
- Nevertheless, one in four said they believed site-based management would "very likely lead to a radical transformation of school governance and organization."
- But again, close to half of the respondents (44 percent) said they believed the measure was "very likely to strengthen a more traditional governance and organizational structure."
- Only 15 respondents (7.5 percent) said site-based management and decision making in their districts would "very likely be a waste of time and energy."

Additional survey findings appear throughout Section One.

One in four said they believed site-based management would "very likely lead to a radical transformation of school governance and organization."

SBM: Defining Through Terminology

As the educational reform movement matures, the terminology used to describe it has gone through its own transformation. "Reform" is about "restructuring," which is about "reculturing," which is about "continuous improvement," which is about "reinventing government."

Site-based management, too, as reflected in the literature, is about rethinking and rebuilding a culture that guides and supports practitioners to work together through unsettled and unsettling questions to make learning richer for students. Site-based management, like reform, isn't something you live through and finish. Likewise, it isn't something you ignore so it will go away.

What follows is a comparison of Old World thinking (convention) to New World thinking (transformation) as expressed through a vocabulary of "reform" gleaned from literature on educational change (renewal) and site-based management (decentralization). The terms collectively describe the concepts of the eight key points raised in this book as the criteria for effective site-based management.

Old World		New World
mandated	**Commitment**	visionary
piecemeal		systemic
symbolic		substantive
moderate		radical
positions	**Attitude**	interests
power		trust
programs		ideas
compliance		improvement
complacency		initiative
entitlement		empowerment
fear		respect
school as object of change		school as center of change
individual responsibility		professional, collective pursuit
reform	**Purpose**	continual renewal
program		philosophy
conformity	**Action**	creativity
isolation		collaboration
individual autonomy		collective autonomy
industrial unionism		professional unionism
collective bargaining		collaborative bargaining
mechanistic, formalistic		fluid, dynamic
conventional	**Leadership**	transformational
hierarchical		cultural
autocratic		consultative
paternalistic		participatory
command		influence
monitor	**Readiness**	train
control		support
competition	**Character**	cooperation
win-lose		win-win
vote		consensus
low-trust		high-trust
contrived collegiality		high-involvement
adversarial democracy		unitary democracy
rigidity		flexibility
bureaucratic		participatory
cataclysmic	**Steadfastness**	evolutionary
quick fix		long term
"three to five years"		forever

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for example, requires the principal to be the primary leader or manager of the school. But the process also requires shared decision making and the creation of school-based management teams, which empower teachers, staff, parents, students, and community members to make significant instructional and non-instructional decisions that affect their school.

According to an assistant superintendent, school-based management is "the best thing to happen to public education in a long time because it's going to sharpen our ability to hold professionals in the field of education accountable for how well kids are learning."

'Professional' vs. 'Bureaucrat'

Professionalism, on the other hand, refers to creating a school culture and climate that empowers and motivates the people closest to the students and the communities they serve to take ownership of school improvement efforts, to share expertise, and to become energized in their work.

Professionalism in this sense, however, does not necessarily mean money, status, and autonomy. Rather, "professional practice is distinguished by its efforts to become *client-oriented* and *knowledge-based*," said Linda Darling-Hammond and A. Lin Goodwin, both of Teachers College at Columbia University.

Educators today, they noted, "are rarely involved in making decisions about those matters that deeply affect their work and students' learning opportunities — decisions about curriculum, teaching materials, standards for student assessment, the organization of the school and the ways it structures learning opportunities, and the selection of other teachers and administrators. Schools thus treat teachers more as bureaucrats than as professionals."

Site-based management often is criticized for focusing too much on the working conditions and professional status of adults and not enough on the fate of students.

It is in changing this perception of educator as bureaucrat defined in *Webster's New World Dictionary* as a person "who follows a routine in a mechanical, unimaginative way, insisting on proper forms, petty rules" that site-based management faces its greatest challenge and greatest benefit.

What About the Students?

And yet even when site-based management is successful with changing the roles and relationships of educators, it often is criticized for focusing too much on the working conditions and professional status of adults and not enough on the fate of students.

Site-based councils often are rebuked for being mired in trivia and in the mechanics of making decisions, for failing to create a framework in which collaborative decision making can thrive, and for having little actual authority delegated to the school site. As Betty Malen of the University of Washington noted in a 1993 *Education Week* article: "It's real hard to find locations where, for the lack of a better term, the reality meets the rhetoric."

In discussing this disconnection, Richard F. Elmore, a senior research fellow with the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, noted that:

> Whatever the politics of centralization and decentralization is "about" in American education — and it is about many things — it is not fundamentally or directly about teaching and learning. This disconnection between structural reform and the core technology of schooling means that major reforms can wash over the educational system, consuming large amounts of scarce resources — money; time; the energy of parents, teachers, and administrators; the political capital of elected officials — without having any discernible effect on what students actually learn in school.

A similar finding was made in a report on decentralization by RAND's Institute for Education and Training. According to the authors, Paul T. Hill and Josephine Bonan, "site-based management enables a staff to tailor a school to the specific needs of students in attendance; but when given the freedom to govern themselves, staffs of existing schools too often bog

SBM and NASDC: 'Break-the-Mold' Schools

The New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC) was launched by business leaders in 1991 at the request of then President Bush, who asked that the business world raise $200 million to fund "break-the-mold" schools. President Clinton offered his support for the program, noting that the new school designs would "provide promising alternatives for schools and states as they work to reinvent their schools . . ."

According to a review of design specifications prepared by NASDC, the projects, while not under the banner of site-based management, nevertheless adhere to the principles of SBM: that those closest to the students work collaboratively to make the key decisions concerning what is taught, how, and in which time frames and settings.

For example:

- **ATLAS Communities**, an effort designed by Theodore R. Sizer, James P. Comer, Howard Gardner, and others, requires a planning and management team of teachers, parents, school counselors, students of high school age, and the principal to prioritize, coordinate, and monitor school activities. Problem solving is to be done collaboratively and largely done by consensus.
- **Community Learning Centers of Minnesota** hold that teachers design curricula, arrange staff training, supervise paraprofessional personnel, review peer performance, oversee the purchase and use of technology, and assure that assessments of learning results are available to stakeholders. A council broadly representative of parents, educators, students, community businesses, and social service agencies is to manage each center. Minnesota law allows for charter schools, in which teachers contract to run a school, and continue to do so as long as state learning goals are met.
- **Co-NECT Schools** feature self-managing "clusters" of students, teachers, administrators, and community members designed to strengthen relationships and to foster a more effective use of resources. The cluster's teacher team is to be a self-governing management unit, responsible for the curriculum, budget, instructional organization, and management of the cluster's school day and school-year calendar.
- **Expeditionary Learning**, with an emphasis on community service and character development, holds that children will learn to think by participating in programmatically related voyages and adventures. Leaders in this design are "in the middle reaching out," rather than "at the top reaching down." Expedition advisers and principal advisers work in teams. Curriculum and instruction are school-initiated.
- **Los Angeles Learning Centers** are to operate on "zero-based budgeting" procedures under the control of a site-based management council composed of teachers, parents, students, and the center principal. The council is to make all decisions concerning budget, personnel, curriculum, strategic planning, discipline, community relations, and students' rights.
- **National Alliance for Restructuring Education** is to adapt for education the principles of quality management. The principal, no longer the enforcer of rules made elsewhere, is to lead and facilitate teachers' efforts. A far-reaching development program is to contain observation and modeling, active practice, "scaffolding" (putting a new teacher side by side with a master teacher), coaching, and guided reflection.

Those closest to the students work collaboratively to make the key decisions concerning what is taught, how, and in which time frames and settings.

down in negotiations about their own working conditions."

Some people argue, however, that attention to the latter — adult relationships and working conditions — is a prerequisite for attention to the former — what students learn and how. As the argument goes, schools that don't work for teachers have little chance of working for students. Ultimately, Carl Glickman said, "The aim is to have a school environment that fulfills students' needs and, in doing so, fulfills adults' needs as well."

First Things First

James E. Henderson, former superintendent in Montgomery Township, New Jersey, said he would not have considered site-based management on more substantive educational issues until his strike-torn district, wrought with long-standing conflict and contentious relations, had some success with shared decision making over contractual and workplace issues.

"If that eventually led to site-based management, so be it," Henderson said, "but we couldn't do the latter without first getting through the former."

A representative of the Pinellas County, Florida, Classroom Teachers Association said it is important to remember that "teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions. When you help teachers, you also help students." As Seymour B. Sarason, professor of psychology emeritus at Yale University and author of *The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform,* put it: "We need to reconceive schools as being good places for both students *and* teachers."

Training and 'Unlearning'

Glenview, Illinois, and Greece, New York, like many other districts, have found that because school-based management questions the age-old rules, roles, and relationships that have defined traditional schooling for most of this century, what is required is not just to take on new responsibilities, but also to embark on a voyage of vigilant "unlearning," to unravel the steadfast reasonings, attitudes, behaviors, and values, that cement the status quo.

As Wohlstetter and Mohrman noted in the January 1993 issue of *CPRE Finance Briefs*: "The transition to SBM involves extensive changes in roles that must be accompanied by intensive development of new skills and capabilities. It cannot be understood simply as a transfer of power. Rather, it is the establishment of new and vital roles for many stakeholders and it will not succeed unless development is planned and resources are provided."

A district in Texas found that it had to train adults to improve their personal, interpersonal, and communication skills before they could expect teams to work successfully together to identify and address the more fundamental issues of schooling and learning.

Such was the experience in Glenview and Greece, according to Kerchner, who studied emerging patterns of labor relations, work life, and school organization in public education.

In those two districts, he said, substantial time had to be devoted "to the basics: how to hold meetings, how to make decisions, how to think about new ideas." As it turned out, while "the first school decisions are inevitably small ones, the progression from concern about the Xerox machine and rules for meetings to clear-eyed analysis of educational programs generally takes about three years."

Given the importance of benefits related to decisions and the decision-making process itself, it is not surprising that respondents to the AASA survey rated as important the training to help people make better decisions together — and to find the time to do so.

- Four in 10 respondents (42 percent) said training is "not provided, but needed" or "will likely be needed" for "time management skills."
- Likewise in high demand by at least three out of 10 respondents were "conflict resolution" (37 percent), "alternatives for leadership restructuring" (35 percent), and "ways to find, collect, and use" data and information pertaining to individual schools (33 percent) and to the district as a whole (32 percent). Also in high demand: "budgeting knowledge/skills" (31 percent) and "conducting effective/productive meetings" (30 percent).
- Training provided as a "major, ongoing initiative" or "mostly on an ad hoc basis" was most often noted for "teamwork skills (problem solving, decision making, communication skills)" (51 percent), "alternatives for curriculum and instruction" (46 percent), and "personnel/

human resource knowledge/skills" (42 percent).

- If they could start over again to implement site-based management, what would they do differently? Forty of 104 administrators who responded to the open-ended question (38 percent) said they would concentrate more on training.

Expanding Horizons

Training serves a dual function: it helps people to develop a language of reform and change and to expand their horizons, Kerchner contended. He noted, for example, that in Louisville, Kentucky, "Phil[lip] Schlechty's phrase, 'every leader a teacher, every teacher a leader, every student a success' has garnered a place in the district's iconography."

Training also empowers (or, to use a less politically charged term, enables) those involved in educational decision making to master the personal and interpersonal skills needed to make group efforts work. As a JCPenney store manager involved in a district school-based management project in Texas put it: "You can't just lay [a new management philosophy] on somebody and say, 'This is your vision, now go out and do it.' That's like trying to drive a car without a steering mechanism. You can start the engine, you have gas in it, but it's real hard to find a direction."

Concerns of the Naysayers

Mapping the landscape for site-based management involves not only how a system is organized and governed, but also how people work with and relate to each other and to their personal and professional values and beliefs.

It's a safe bet that if a critical mass does not support site-based management — regardless of how many training and vision-setting gatherings are held — it has a slim chance of effecting substantive change over the long term. And the odds are that not everyone will be sold on the idea of putting time, training, resources, and even hope into SBM. Consider these responses to this AASA survey question: If you have no plans to implement site-based management and decision-making, why?

> We have found no data to suggest that it would improve instruction in our district. Being a one-school district, which already has student, teacher, and parent advisory groups, there is a large amount of input.
>
> I'm not convinced it is effective management. I don't think teachers will want to spend the time being managers.
>
> Site-based management may be part of an answer to a more global problem in education. Implemented without firm parameters and by itself, it will become part of the problem.
>
> The central administration and board of education risk losing control and their empire.
>
> We are already doing many of the things which are included in a site-based management plan.

Why Should I?

In 1993, Charles Achilles of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro posed these questions to educators at a conference: "Is it good? Is it here to stay?" The answers were mixed.

- "The jury is out," said James W. Kushman of Portland State University in Oregon. "If somehow it doesn't penetrate into the classroom, it's probably not good; it's just making decisions about trivial things."
- "Simply adopting it is insufficient," said Rodney T. Ogawa of the University of California at Riverside. "In the end it's about democratization of schools, which means it's about control. Deep down in our guts we feel this is the way we ought to run school . . . but unless underlying values and beliefs are changed about who has the right to control, nothing will happen."
- "Maybe it works, maybe it doesn't," said Charles A. Reavis of Texas Tech University, "but there's enough evidence out there to give it a try. I'm afraid we'll cash in the whole business before it's even gotten a chance [to succeed]."

Authentic SBM: An Eight-Point Test

For whatever reason a school or district decides to venture into site-based management, success is likely to depend on a robust discussion of purpose, form, and function. This is particularly true during the "courtship" and implementation stages, when readiness for change is being determined by a sharing of what Wohlstetter and Mohrman call the four essential components of control: power, knowledge, resources, and rewards.

"Large-scale change, such as decentralization, cannot be simply installed," the researchers noted, based on studies of the private sector. "Rather, it unfolds over time through a gradual learning process. Therefore, the transition to SBM is best approached by establishing structures and processes that enable groups of people to discuss new directions, try new approaches, and learn from them."

Large-scale change, such as decentralization, cannot be simply installed. Rather, it unfolds over time through a gradual learning process.

In arguing for a school system "built around school autonomy and parent-student choice rather than direct democratic control," John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe predicted the heated controversy their book, *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools,* would set off. The authors made a salient point for what could be a healthy discourse on site-based management as well, or with any other school reform proposal for that matter. As Chubb and Moe noted:

> Who is right and who is wrong about the specifics is less important in the short term than the kinds of ideas people see as worth arguing about. This is what will drive knowledge, debate, and change in the future.

Eight Keys to SBM

This Critical Issues Report, then, establishes food for thought in the site-based management dialogue. It proposes eight key points that should be addressed in considering, starting, advancing, or even revoking a site-based management/shared decision-making effort or policy.

In effect, these points suggest a starting point for defining authentic, or true, site-based management and for determining readiness to take on more decision-making responsibility at the site level. These points and their corollaries fall under the headings of Commitment, Attitude, Purpose, Action, Leadership, Readiness, Character, and Steadfastness.

1 **Commitment.** Most essential to the effective implementation of site-based management is a collective and unambiguous commitment from school board members, superintendents and central office administrators at the top, to principals and teachers at the site. Community buy-in also is an essential ingredient.

- **Top to bottom.** Site-based management is a top-down, bottom-up reform that must be fueled by strong research and driven by powerful ideas and inner convictions, and not just state mandates or one or two "bosses" or influential leaders.
- **Inside-outside.** Site-based management is an inside-out, outside-in reform, in which the expectations, experiences, and expertise of educators, school officials, and community players (such as parents, corporate executives, and civic leaders) help shape the ideas that determine what students learn, how, and in which time frames and settings. SBM is designed to enhance broad-based community support, without which comprehensive and systemic renewal is likely to fail.
- **The art of collaboration.** As a means to an end, SBM aids the art and practice of engaging in group, collaborative work to continually assess the needs of a community, the workings of a system, the efficacies of alternative approaches, and the logistics of implementation and assessment strategies.

2 **Attitude.** Participatory management and decision making must be a way of doing business, the means to an end, not a fleeting moment.

- **People seek permanence.** People do not meaningfully question or change their values, beliefs, and behaviors — or their roles, relationships, and responsibilities — just to join a race that may not go the distance.
- **More than innovation.** Site-based management, in whatever form it takes or

title it goes by, is not about innovative work — which hardens the cynics — but professional work — which awakens the faithful. It is not an initiative in and of itself, but part and parcel of many other "reforms" or approaches, such as teacher empowerment and quality management.

- **Some won't cut it.** Despite the best efforts and positive attitudes of many, however, there still will be employees who, given training and support, can't or won't adapt to a collaborative work environment. What should be done with them?

3 **Purpose**. At the heart of every planning, organizational, and advancement effort needs to be the question: "Site-based management to achieve what?"

- **Form follows function.** If what one hopes to gain through collaborative work environments is better student achievement, then the connection to what students learn, how, and in which time frames and settings must be made from the start.
- **Set parameters.** Setting the parameters for site-based decision making around what students should know and be able to do requires attention to what *schools* should know and be able to do, specifically in curriculum, instruction, and staff development. The intent is to keep the focus on the substantive issues of school renewal, teaching and learning, rather than on the more mechanical issues of day-to-day operations and the more trivial issues associated with process and governance.
- **Start with adults.** If the intent, however, *is* to improve the working conditions and benefits for adults, then that, too, must be understood from the start. In some instances, it may be necessary to attend to these matters to build the trust needed to tackle the more substantive issues of school renewal.

4 **Action**. Empowerment must be modeled and recognized throughout the system, from the superintendent's office to the classroom, resulting in nontraditional roles and responsibilities for all key players.

- **Be patient.** If school employees at first are recalcitrant, they may be more amenable to change after an ongoing demonstration of valued practice and results. Meanwhile, celebrating small successes along the way encourages those "in the fight" to press on.
- **Set an example.** Young people also value that which they see matters. If the skills essential to collaborative work environments are modeled by the adults in a school, students will learn that these leadership, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills are valued not only in the classroom, but also in "the real world."

5 **Leadership**. What is being proposed must be facilitated and supported systemwide against budget cuts, burnout, disillusionment, and naysayers, calling to question what leadership is, who has it, and how it can be used to build capacity for continuous improvement.

- **Leadership, not power.** To attain true supportive and facilitative leadership (as opposed to positional power), the system must give time, recognize effort, share knowledge, accept risks, tolerate failures, drive out fear, diffuse political pressures, accept responsibility, and communicate actions and results — both good and bad — not just to one or two key participants or groups, but to all those who have a stake in how well the school runs.
- **Other support.** Facilitative leadership also supports grant writing, builds and maintains community and business partnerships, and brokers resources — not necessarily money, but expertise, talent, use of buildings, and access to training, management, and organizational tools and techniques to support the work of site-based groups.

6 **Readiness**. To ensure both institutional and individual preparedness and support for change, ongoing research, development, education, and training are imperative to build skills and knowledge and to challenge people's conventions of what should or can be.

- **Establish learning communities.** Training is more than just "one-shot" workshops developed outside and delivered to a targeted audience. The goal is to establish learning communities in which training is ongoing and connected to real-life situations.

- **Guarantee stability.** Readiness is especially crucial to guarantee stability and continuity given the likelihood that there will be some turnover in key positions on the school board, in the central office, at the bargaining table, in the school, or on the site-based team.

7 **Character**. To advance the ideas, customs, skills, and art of collaborative work environments, sites must become "learning communities," democratic to the core.

- **Building the culture.** The culture of a learning organization is characterized by reflective practice; comfort with change; patience with setbacks; strong, but not hardened, professional egos; respect for opposing viewpoints; trust; a maturity to face and neutralize conflict and contentious relationships; and a determination to include all groups in the inner circle — and not just those inclined to a certain way of thinking.
- **Prepare for improvement.** Undergirding these characteristics is the advancement of shared understandings and expectations, a binding vision, and a strong work ethic for continual improvement and change.

8 **Steadfastness**. In the persistent pursuit of change and growth, there must be time, patience, and a firm determination — supported by district policy and practices — not to return to the comforts of centralized tradition, no matter how rocky the road gets.

- **Build trust.** Staying the course of change is especially important if the tradition is one of top-heavy authority and control (low trust) rather than respect and support for front-line workers (high trust).
- **Beware of lip service.** Site-based management is a reform in name only if those who "give up control" loosen some regulations but enact others under the guise of accountability.

The Historical, Global Context

In 1918, educator Flora Smalley wrote: "The struggle for democracy in the schools is nationwide; the struggle is not ended yet and will not be until the happy day when the teacher has the right to make the course of study which she uses, to choose the textbooks with which she works, and to elect to office the people under whom and with whom she administers the school."

"One wonders," said Charles Achilles, professor of educational administration at the University of North Carolina, "when we're going to build upon this research base."

Back to the Future

In today's struggle for reform and relevancy, it is easy to discount new ideas as fads and panaceas, criticizing the "quick-fix" mentality that not only can prompt meaningless ventures, but also undercut promising new directions. What to many people is the latest fad or ground-breaking initiative is to other people a golden chestnut rich in history and meaning.

And so it is with site-based management, the term used here to describe any effort that attempts to achieve collaborative work environments in which those closest to the situation work together, without hierarchical status, to identify and answer the critical questions of how to educate students better.

Site-based management is, in many ways, a matter of going back to the future. In his book, *The Case for Change: Rethinking the Preparation of Educators*, Seymour Sarason quotes from a condensation of an article written by American philosopher John Dewey in 1903 and titled, "Democracy in Education." As Dewey noted:

> What does democracy mean save that the individual is to have a share in determining the conditions and the aims of his own work and that on the whole, through the free and mutual harmonizing of different individuals, the work of the world is better done than when planned, arranged, and directed by a

> few, no matter how wise or of how good intent that few? How can we justify our belief in the democratic principle elsewhere, and then go back entirely upon it when we come to education?

Collaboration

Site-based management is not only about democratic governance, but also about collaboration, which, according to William H. Schubert, president of the John Dewey Society, "is a term used widely today to refer to partnership ventures by scholars and practitioners who share expertise to resolve problems encountered in educational settings."

But too many people, he added, "are virtually unaware of the heritage of similar work at their disposal. If collaborative researchers of today immersed themselves in similar work of the Progressive Education era, they might well determine more ways to involve not only teachers, administrators, and scholar-researchers, but students and parents as well."

Supervision and Leadership

The tenets of site-based management also are reflected in the supervision and leadership literature of the past half century. Edward Pajak, chair of the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Georgia, noted that in 1943, the year the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) was founded, the organization's yearbook, *Leadership at Work,* "offered advice that has an astonishingly contemporary ring." That advice, Pajak noted in the 1993 ASCD yearbook, *Challenges and Achievements of American Education,* included:

"Give cooperative planning a *real* chance... When people *work together* things happen that don't happen if you work alone."

From 1943 to the early 1960s, Pajak noted, "writers on supervision clarified and elaborated on the concept of democratic educational leadership" as rooted in the philosophy of John Dewey. The 1960 ASCD yearbook, for example, "placed great emphasis on leadership that emerges from within the group to meet the challenges of the situation at hand. It emphasized that all individuals and groups in the school and community have leadership potential that should be exercised."

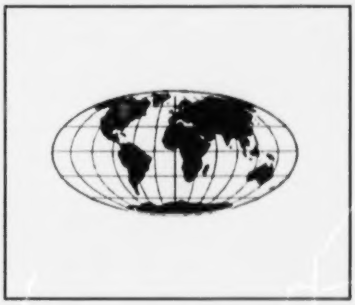
Times changed, however, with the growing federal role in public education, the growth of collective bargaining, and an increase in size and complexity of schools and districts. "As early as 1961," Pajak noted, citing an article in *American School Administration,* "the proposal was made that school leaders should be less concerned about whether their behavior was democratic and more concerned with whether it was effective in bringing about change and convincing others 'that a new course of action is a better one.'"

"Democratic educational leadership rapidly lost ground during the 1970s to the view that leadership is a function of position in the organization and should be adaptable to fit the requirements of different situations," he added.

How can we justify our belief in the democratic principle elsewhere, and then go back entirely upon it when we come to education?

— John Dewey

Everybody's Job



Leadership in problem-solving organizations, as it relates to studying a system and working collaboratively to improve it, is everyone's job, and that is what the Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching at Stanford University had in mind when it called upon policy makers to foster "learning communities" among teachers.

The center's five-year, $3.7 million, federally funded study found that teachers who thrived were part of a "professional community" that, as an *Education Week* article in March 1993 reported, "enabled its members to discuss problems and mutually develop strategies for dealing with them."

According to the article, "The study found that while improved academic content is a critical variable, the most effective teachers had hooked up with a network of professionals who addressed problems and found solutions together. Such networks included subject-matter departments within schools, entire school faculties, and outside groups, such as the Urban Mathematics Collaborative."

Milbrey W. McLaughlin, director of the center, was quoted as saying: "Not one [of the teachers studied] who was able to develop sustained and challenging learning opportunities for students was in isolation. Each belonged to a professional learning community."

Venturing 'Beyond Industrialism'

Power under site-based management — and in these post-industrial times — is not a function of position or seniority, but of expertise and experience. It requires a new role for many players, as evidenced by the example of management and teachers unions and the policies they operate under.

In a paper that explores "the vulnerability and possibility of teachers unions during institutional reinvention," Charles T. Kerchner of the University of Washington noted that in 1942, the term "adversarial democracy" characterized much of contemporary school politics, in which educational policy emerged from "the clash and settlement between interest groups."

A serious underestimation is often made of the changing role of the building administrator. In a situation that works, it's the council that should be accountable — not the building administrator.
— Michael Schoeppach

But today, in districts venturing "beyond industrialism," school reformers seem to be lurching toward an ideal based on an ancient understanding of democracy.

"In that older understanding," Kerchner said, "people who disagree do not vote; they reason together until they agree on the best answer."

First Line of Defense

Too often today, however, democracy in action erupts into hostile confrontations over such emotionally charged issues as sex education, character education, outcomes-based education, and even school scheduling.

Site-based management, if it is indeed about relational, and not positional, power, could be a first line of defense against the narrow-minded onslaught of single-issue advocacy groups in a system that strives to respect diversity and the will of the people.

In Texas, for example, one district's commitment to site-based management allowed it to consider year-round schooling for one neighborhood, in which poor parents in need of quality child care hungered for it, and drop it in another, where wealthier parents objected because it would interfere with their summer vacations.

In the same district, what could have been an explosive debate over one school's proposed sex-education course was defused when it was addressed by a site-based management team with broad-based community representation. Both sides — those in favor of sex education and those opposed — agreed that this particular program needed to be studied more and that other options should be considered.

Carl D. Glickman, director of the League of Professional Schools and author of the book, *Renewing America's Schools: A Guide for School-Based Action*, said that public schools were founded in the belief that they should "prepare citizens for productive participation in a democracy."

As Glickman noted, "Every time some group works to get something in schools they feel is important, the educational agenda gets moved to whatever that political pressure is." If public schools are to survive, they will have to find a better way to meet the needs of the diverse groups and interests that can cement or splinter the whole. Site-based management could be the means to that end.

Reinventing and Reconnecting

In post-industrial times, businesses and governments also are taking a closer look at how they keep shop. The elements of an ideal organization, Kerchner said, have come to include leveling hierarchies, integrating functions, increasing flexibility, rewarding creativity, and increasing information.

In this cultural context, site-based management plans take root and grow as they reflect a nation's search for reinventing the institutions and reconnecting to the people and systems that govern their lives and livelihoods.

At the Education Commission of the States 1993 National Forum and Annual Meeting, Ernesto Cortes Jr., director of the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation, who leads and trains people for effective involvement in their neighborhoods, communities, and governments, drew parallels between politics and school reform:

> What I'm suggesting to you is that one of the difficult issues you're going to have to look at is more and more people are feeling themselves disconnected and alienated from decision-making processes, and they feel very cynical and skeptical about electoral ac-

> tivity. And so the result you're seeing across the board [is] a decline in participation because people are not stupid. They know when they are just a backdrop. They know when they are just marginal. They know when they have no real role to play. And one of the difficulties in the whole strategy for school reform, and one of the questions that has to be dealt with, is: "How do you get people who are parents and people who are taxpayers to recognize that they have a legitimate and meaningful role to play in the politics of school reform and school finance?"

Some people see site-based management as the tool for getting people involved and reconnected not only to their schools, but also to their communities and to their responsibilities as citizens in a robust democracy. It's an offshoot of the "reinventing government" movement and similar to the "re-engineering" efforts in business and industry. In these resource-scarce times, syndicated columnist Neal Peirce noted:

> There's a critical role for the so-called reinvention principles in today's governments — being entrepreneurial, treating citizens like valued customers, involving employees and citizens in setting an organization's mission and priorities, delegating authority and then holding managers accountable for results.

Meritocracy and Alienation

"We forget," said Cortes, "that most of our institutions — public schools and churches and local governments — depended historically on the existence of social capital; the involvement of adults in developing and shaping collaboratively the agendas of those particular institutions." Developed instead in schools was the notion of expert, of meritocracy, which, like Plato's notion of guardianship, has served to further disconnect people, to, as Cortes put it,"alienate ordinary people from the decision-making process."

Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, who in 1991 gave sweeping authority over educational decisions to committees in each of Denver's 112 schools, spoke in 1993 of author David Osborne's work on reinventing government, in which government is seen as community-owned, competitive, mission-driven, results-oriented, customer-driven, decentralized, and market-driven.

While educators should learn much from this movement, Romer said, they should also make distinctions as to when it is applicable. For example, he said, it is too simplistic in education to say you must pay attention to your customers, because the customers, whether they be poor parents or employers, may not know what product they should desire.

In education, Romer said, "we need to keep asking the question, 'What is the end product that we ought to help our customers develop a taste for?'"

Society's Ills: SBM Counterattacks

In past and present school reform, good ideas are not lacking. Many of them build upon the sound theories and practices of the past in becoming the strong and enlightening examples of the present.

But the unsettling reality is that not all schools will benefit from the gains made. Plagued by societal ills and community breakdowns and disenchantment, too many schools — particularly urban schools and those that serve the rural poor — struggle just to survive.

"That's where the real crisis lies," Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and a former U.S. Commissioner of Education, said in an interview following his keynote address at the 1993 ASCD annual meeting. "We have virtually ignored the urban schools. We haven't been willing to identify their problems as being different, not just in degree but in kind."

Edward Pajak of the University of Georgia, who also spoke at the ASCD meeting, noted that "large numbers of our students come to school today who are alienated, chronically depressed, chemically dependent, poor, homeless, malnourished, and physically, emotionally, and sexually abused."

Moreover, Pajak added, "many students' learning capabilities are diminished even before they are born due to inadequate diets and prenatal drug and alcohol consumption. Schools have absorbed the frontal assault of these problems," and the "disintegration of families and community" and the "unraveling of our social fabric."

More Than Just Teaching

To counterattack societal ills, educators and policy makers are taking seriously the movement to integrate the business of schooling with the business of social, health, and community agencies that provide services to youth and their families.

Authentic SBM, in this regard, is not only the means for enabling greater collaboration and cooperation among the people who work for the agencies that have historically competed for resources, but also for building the partnerships that create greater responsibility and accountability for the needs and well-being of children. As Pajak noted:

> For educators who have come to expect direction and impetus for change from the federal government, state legislatures, and education departments, we've grown accustomed to looking to others for answers, to research that is done by experts. I think that educational leadership must enlarge its responsibility for the learning of children to include the social conditions that interfere with their learning. The needs of students must be foremost in any move to the transformation of schools into learning communities.

We haven't accepted the fact that it's not just a school problem — it's a community problem.

— Ernest Boyer

Taking a holistic approach to educating the child, Pajak said, means "that practitioner-led research and particularly action are needed at the state and local levels to improve schools and the environments that students inhabit." Also needed is connection to the community of interests and services outside the schoolhouse.

As Boyer put it: "We haven't accepted the fact that it's not just a school problem — it's a community problem, and that some of the pathologies in the culture are impinging upon the school's efforts. Unless we define [the issue] in a larger social setting, there's no way for the school to do it alone."

Site-Based Management and Choice

Site-based management, as a means of connecting people to their schools, might be what saves public schools from being overtaken by private concerns.

In his book, *Renewing America's Schools: A Guide for School-Based Action*, Glickman argued that "public education has entered a dangerous time, when its very existence is being questioned." He noted that:

> After a decade of legislated reform, bureaucratic control, standardization of work, and external decisions for improving schools, we are shifting toward an unfettering of the system, allowing schools to be different and encouraging site-based autonomy and responsibility. The choice-and-voucher movement has helped to decentralize reforms. Before it dismantles public education, those who believe in public schools, public school districts, and community-elected school boards want the time to show what can happen if every school is given the support, structure, and opportunity to act. The opportunity exists, the challenge is great, and the consequences are profound.

It is no longer enough, as it appeared to be in the early- to mid-1980s, to push for more credits, more testing, more homework, and more time on task. Today's movement for renewal is venturing into territory heretofore unimagined as the nation pushes toward national standards and assessment systems, break-the-mold schools, charter schools, for-profit schools, and market-driven choice plans.

Failure to answer the call for reform could have devastating effects, as Fuhrman noted in her book on education policy. "Educators," she wrote, "may believe it is in their self-interest to keep policy makers out of the educational business, but what is truly in their self-interest is to support a conception of policy that would undergird rather than undermine school-based improvement. The alternatives may be grim: a few excellent schools amidst a failing system or even abandonment of the public system and the privatization of schooling."

Redefining Autonomy

In their 1990 book, *Politics, Markets and America's Schools*, Chubb and Moe made the case for a radical idea. Based on their finding that the most successful schools in America were those that had the greatest degree of site-based autonomy, in which teachers were key participants in decisions, they called for a new system of public education in which "the very *capacity* for control, not simply its exercise, would essentially be eliminated." In the Chubb and Moe scenario:

> Most of those who previously held authority over the schools would have their authority permanently withdrawn, and that authority would be vested in school, parents, and stu-

dents. Schools would be legally autonomous: free to govern themselves as they want, specify their own goals and programs and methods, design their own organizations, select their own student bodies, and make their own personnel decisions. Parents and students would be legally empowered to choose among alternative schools, aided by institutions designed to promote active involvement, well-informed decisions, and fair treatment.

What to many people sounds like an ideal solution to troubled schools is to other people a misguided notion. Most vociferous in this argument is Jonathan Kozol, noted civil rights activist and author of *Savage Inequalities,* who argues that massive resources would have to be spent first to bring all facilities up to par, to ensure equal spending per student, to transport all students to their schools of choice, and to educate the uneducated, impoverished, and disenfranchised about options.

"Contrary to myths," Kozol said, "the poor schools do not magically improve to meet the competition, nor do they self-destruct. They linger on as the repositories for children everybody else has fled."

Practicing What Is Preached

In drawing the historical and global context, perhaps the most important reason for pursuing site-based management is the opportunity to model for students the skills we say they will need to make better lives for themselves as workers, family members, and community-minded citizens.

If our children need to be lifelong learners, to be able to team together, pose problems, seek solutions, work through choices, communicate ideas, respect opposing viewpoints, reach consensus, evaluate efforts, and build upon results, then we, too, as the adults who "teach" them should model those very same skills, behaviors, and attitudes in the way we go about our work and relate to others.

If we don't do it, or don't do it well, how can we expect our kids to master these skills, or even recognize that they are important?

"We're told today," Pajak said, "that as organizations become increasingly information-based, they must develop a capacity for learning." He went on:

> According to the economist and management theorist Peter Drucker, each nation's economic competitiveness depends on its schools' ability to prepare knowledgeable, self-disciplined individuals who recognize their responsibility for lifelong learning, who can work cooperatively with others, and who possess strong analytical, interpersonal, and communication skills. I'd like to suggest that these qualities closely approximate those needed for citizenship in a democracy as well.

In an address at the 1993 AERA annual meeting, Deborah Meier, founder of the highly touted Central Park East School in East Harlem and a recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant, raised this issue in her remarks on, "Why Kids Don't Want to Be Well-Educated." She asked:

> Whoever in schools saw teachers engaged in real discussion? What kid ever saw adults in schools talking seriously, using the skills we claim to admire? Whoever in schools saw teachers for that matter as powerful citizens of their own schools, making important decisions about their own work, rather than mere technicians following the text, handing out the test, scoring and grading, whose only power, in short, lies in their power over these most unequal students before them? I want schools that are themselves centers of learning, intellectual communities engaged in the best examples they can . . . of the art they are supposed to engage their students in.

The Children Are Watching

It was Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget who proposed that children are meaning makers: they learn through discovery and invention; through the process of trying to make things happen, by manipulating their environment. Children never stop watching; they will watch to see if the adults in their schools can "make things happen" by influencing, managing, and operating collaborative work and learning environments. So believes Joyce O. Eastlund of Bowling Green State University in Ohio, who maintained that:

> If we expect students to think critically, to use their imaginations to query, and to interact with the objects under study, we must empower them to do so. We must arm them with the skills and concepts necessary for critical thinking and encourage their interaction with other students and teachers. Of course, if students accept the responsibility to question and criticize teachers, those teachers, who seek to be experts and providers of truth, must give up a measure of

power. Likewise, if administrators ask teachers to empower the students, administrators must give those teachers the authority to design curricula that suit particular student bodies, to find methods that consider different student learning styles and community values, and to assist in allocation of the limited resources available. In such a system, decisions about curricula, method, and resources must follow a consensus of the managing body.

It will be increasingly difficult for teachers to prepare students for jobs requiring flexibility, teamwork, and discretion when teachers themselves face a work environment mired in industrial assumptions.
— Charles T. Kerchner

Schools and Citizenship

Educators' practicing what they preach supports Kerchner's contention that they must venture beyond industrialism. "It will be increasingly difficult," he said, "for teachers to prepare students for jobs requiring flexibility, teamwork, and discretion when teachers themselves face a work environment mired in industrial assumptions."

As Glickman sees it, "In most of our schools, learning has little relevance to becoming a citizen. Our students are not learning the essentials — how to care about, know about, and act for the betterment of the larger community." So it is, too, for the adults, and that is why so many people are endorsing site-based management. Ultimately, Meier said:

> School must become a place where adults are engaged if we are to engage the young. The shoemaker's practice needs a real shoemaker. A cooking school surrounds its apprentices with cooks and even gives them real people to practice on. Schools must be places where important questions are asked and important answers are given.

"If we believe that our schools are failing us and that children can't learn the basic skills," Meier said, "then what we are saying is that democracy is a utopian ideal, an impossibility, and I just don't believe that. There is nothing in the nature of being human that makes democracy an impossibility."

In Conclusion . . .

In the final analysis, site-based management is about politics — consensus politics. It rests on the belief that the best decisions are made by the people who are most immediately affected by those decisions. Its promise is in becoming the means to equip a "growing army" of educators to do the hard, messy, and continual work of school renewal and governance through a spirit of cooperation and collaboration with all segments of the community.

To be successful, SBM requires in many (if not most) situations that people change their views of what their work is about, how they go about it, how they value it, how they are (and believe they are) valued for it, how they define themselves through it, and how they relate to others. Site-based management requires people to set a vision not only for their work and workplaces, but also for their roles and responsibilities as professionals, leaders, reflective practitioners, role models, and community communicators.

SBM and the Classroom Connection

The League of Professional Schools, under the auspices of the Program for School Improvement at the University of Georgia, involves more than 80 schools in what has been cited as one of the best examples of site-based management work.

Carl D. Glickman, the program's director, noted that the league also has been referred to as an exemplary effort in empowerment, and two league schools have been featured on public television as fine examples of quality management applied to education.

Glickman cautions educators, though, to keep in mind that "we never used any of those terms when we started to do this work. We were just working on what we thought was a good idea, period, and an idea that was consistent with what public education should always have been about."

What schools should be about, Glickman says in his book, *Renewing America's Schools: A Guide for School-Based Action,* is "to prepare citizens for productive participation in a democracy." Just how far a school has strayed from this central mission is reflected in its organization. In his book, Glickman argues that there are three types of school organization:

- **Conventional schools** are characterized by the one-room schoolhouse mentality: autonomy for the individual teacher, small cliques of teachers within the school who befriend one another, lack of dialogue across classrooms and levels about teaching, and a school site seen mostly as a physical place of work.
- **Congenial schools** are characterized by an open, social climate for adults. Communications are friendly, and teachers, parents, caretakers, and principals easily socialize with one another.
- **Collegial schools** are characterized by purposeful, adult-level interactions focused on the teaching and learning of students . . . Mutual professional respect comes from the belief that everyone has the students' interest in mind. The result of such respect is seen in school meetings, where the school community members debate, disagree, and argue before educational decisions are made.

For many schools, the first task is to move from being conventional to being congenial, "but the big job for public education," Glickman said, "is to become collegial, so that social satisfaction is derived mainly from the benefits derived from efforts on behalf of students."

The problem, Glickman added, is that it is all too easy for schools "to take on greater collective decision making, building a structure and making time for it, but still be no better a place for students." That is because, he explained, there is a lack of understanding of the primary goal of schooling: to foster citizenship in a democracy.

Without that understanding, Glickman said, "people may make decisions that improve the lives of adults — a better adult climate, more socially cohesive activities — rather than making decisions that improve teaching and learning."

SBM and TQM: The Quality Connection

In focusing on outcomes, schools, like businesses and governments, are taking a hard look at "quality management." That term is used to describe the customer-focused, continuous improvement philosophy of W. Edwards Deming, the statistician credited with transforming the economy of war-torn Japan to world-class prosperity with ideas shunned in America at the time.

The Deming philosophy, known in some circles as total quality management, is is gaining popularity as America reassesses its love affair with "scientific management" and industrial assumptions. In her 1990 book, *Deming Management at Work,* Mary Walton writes:

> The practice of management today, as taught in American business schools and as found in most companies, has changed little since the early part of this century, when the proponents of "scientific management," led by industrial engineer Frederick Winslow Taylor, left their mark upon industry. In their view, soon to grip the nation, man was merely a cog in the giant industrial machine, whose job could be defined and directed by appropriately educated managers administering a set of rules. This notion of scientific management originated in industry but soon took hold in government and grew throughout the service sector. The management system that resulted is rigid and autocratic, as well as unresponsive to both workers and customers. Power and responsibility are lodged at the top. Change does not come easily.

The Deming Way, conceptualized in "Fourteen Points" and "Seven Deadly Diseases," reveals a set of principles and ideas that appear to be common sense in their nature but are revolutionary in their implications.

One disease that relates to site-based management, for example, is the "evaluation by performance, merit rating or annual review of performance," the effects of which, as Walton writes, "are devastating. Teamwork is destroyed, rivalry is nurtured. Performance ratings build fear and leave people bitter, despondent, beaten. They also encourage defection in the ranks of management."

A Common Thread

Deming recognized that when something goes wrong, the American way is to find fault, often with individuals or specific tasks. Deming's 85-15 Rule, however, holds that 85 percent of what goes wrong is with the system and only 15 percent with the individual or thing. Moreover, the 80-20 Rule holds that 80 percent of the problems stem from 20 percent of the causes.

And yet, Walton wrote, "American managers pride themselves on hunches and intuition. When they succeed, they take credit. When they fail, they find someone to blame." In contrast, quality transformation rests on a different set of assumptions:

SBM and TQM, cont.

- Decisions must be based on facts.
- The people who know the work best are the ones who perform it.
- Groups of people working in teams can have more success than individuals working alone.
- Teams need to be trained in a structured problem-solving process, which includes knowledge of how to conduct a meeting.
- It is helpful to display information graphically.

In effect, some of these underlie site-based management work as well. Too often in education, however, fragmentation prevails, with educators throwing out one initiative in favor of another, failing to see the common thread.

At the AASA annual meeting in 1993, James E. Berry, assistant professor of educational administration at Eastern Michigan University and a former principal, stressed that TQM, like Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and the Effective Schools movement, are connected by a common thread: site-based management as defined by the process of engaging in collaborative decision making.

"Any time you implement a program of change, you're going to have conflict," Berry said. "What we sat down and thought about was, 'Is there any way we can resolve this by doing TQM better, OBE better, or Effective Schools better? And our [answer] was shared decision making. Getting the teachers to work together in a collaborative environment was the method or process to work through and make all the other programs work a little better."

Is TQM Essential to SBM?

At least from the classroom teacher's standpoint, school-based management won't work without TQM. Doug Tuthill, president of the Pinellas County (Florida) Classroom Teachers Association, has seen a signification evolution in site-based management since his district adopted it in 1983. But, he explained, "We found that site-based decision making wasn't in and of itself significantly important to student achievement and learning. As a result, we have a major initiative in Total Quality Management."

He put it bluntly: "Site-based decision making is a subset of Total Quality Management." Or, to put it another way, "People who do SBM without TQM have no hope."

Why is that so? "Based on our experience," Tuthill said, "we found that site-based decision making didn't provide a philosophy and a process to transform at the school or district level. We needed a philosophy — not a process — at the school and district levels simultaneously, and TQM allowed us to do that."

He said it took Pinellas County a long time to realize that. "We wandered around in 1991 in the forest of decision making" until TQM was embraced. "Since then, we've had dramatic successes. Probably 10-15 times as much success in the last three years than we had in the first seven."

Any time you implement a program of change, you're going to have conflict.

— James E. Berry

Section 2

Site-Based Management in Practice

Site-based management—as an effort to increase involvement in the decisions that affect what a student learns, how, and in which time frames and settings—is practiced in a great many ways. Not all the efforts discussed in this section are labeled "site-based management," and therefore they are not necessarily the ones included in the best-known studies of the movement. Nevertheless, the eight scenes of collaborative work environments depicted here do reflect the fundamental ideas of authentic site-based management and shared decision making: collaboration, participation, and inclusion guided by the principles of democracy and democratic educational leadership.

Section Highlights:

- **Scene One:** In the Lincoln Unified School District, site-based management is not only *about* the children, but also *involves* the children in crafting a community's "visionary" umbrella for reinventing schooling.
- **Scene Two:** A nightmare begins when a principal attempts to transform a culture of isolated practitioners into a collaborative group of problem solvers — without training, without precedence, and without experience.
- **Scene Three**: This scene portrays the sadly ironic, and all-too-common, ritual of mandating greater autonomy — with a catch.
- **Scene Four**: In East Harlem, New York, the system works because of the "slow and often arduous work of freeing all the players in the system — and the system itself."
- **Scene Five**: An elementary school in Hawaii merges populist governance with representative governance, using town meetings to educate a community about changes needed in education.
- **Scene Six**: A central New Jersey superintendent involves staff in decision making to help heal crippling hostilities.
- **Scene Seven**: An urban district finds that its intention to improve power relations is undermined by power struggles and the shifting of the guard in educational leadership.
- **Scene Eight**: Collaboration, consensus, and a "no-fault" attitude help two Connecticut schools involve staff and parents in making schools more attuned to the needs of students.

Site-Based Management: How It Looks

Site-based management is not just the work of educators and administrators, but also the work of parents, community members, and students. The concept of involving students, however, just like site-based management itself, means many different things to many different people.

While one district may use the input of all students in planning a dramatic and revolutionary approach to K-12 schooling, another district may include a high school student council representative on its site-based management team.

Obviously, these two approaches to site-based management are based on very different philosophical grounds — and will undoubtedly result in very different practices and results. This section reviews in eight parts some of the many different scenes of collaborative work environments, taking a closer look at both the gains and potential failures inherent in participatory management and shared decision-making structures.

SCENE ONE

Authentic SBM: Adults and Students Rethink Teaching and Learning

When the Lincoln Unified School District in Stockton, California, sought to create a "visionary" umbrella under which its schools could flourish, it turned to what we have been describing as site-based management: the process of involving all stakeholders in the key decisions determining what a student learns, how, and in which time frames and settings.

Lincoln took this imperative to heart. If site-based management is about involving the people closest to the students and their learning, then the students themselves should be the voice heard the loudest and the clearest.

This is not often the case. "Too often in public schools," said Lynne Rauch, superintendent in Lincoln, "the last group to be asked [about school improvement] is students. The first group to be asked, generally speaking, are people who have power, people who can influence, people who can hold the superintendent's job in their hands."

In Lincoln's case, Rauch said in a videotape produced by students, "We asked all affected groups. We looked for students who were not engaged, we looked for students who hung out at the park, we looked for students who may have dropped out from the Lincoln system, we looked for students who were already graduates and by everyone else's standards were doing well, to ask them what we could have done to make it better."

Just Imagine . . .

The watershed moment came when students were asked to imagine a school built from scratch: What would it look like? What would students and teachers do there? "For two days students talked and adults listened," said Tom McKenzie, assistant superintendent for education services. "Their responses were responsible. They made sense. They were creative. And it was then we realized that we had the wrong people running the show."

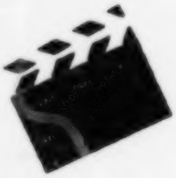
"At first," seventh-grader Alison Korock said, "I really didn't believe [they were asking us], 'cause most adults don't really care about what kids have to say about things. But then, as time went on, I started to believe it, that we really did matter."

It was not only the students, though, who were asked to reinvent schooling. So, too, were community members. "It's very important to have all the stakeholders — anyone who's going to benefit from the system — to participate in the process," Rauch said. "By going out and seeking input from the community you'll get more ideas. In the beginning the community didn't really believe us. They're pretty used to having ideas laid on them and not really being asked but being told, 'This is what we're going to do, what do you think about it?'"

At first, twelfth-grader Grant Goins said, "I thought that perhaps they were going to get some kids and some community members involved, get their opinions, and then do what they wanted to do, just to ease their consciences. I was blown away when they did take our opinions seriously."

Many Become One

What the Lincoln community, both inside and outside the schoolhouse, thought about was



the great divide between what a student is *expected* to learn and what a student is *excited* to learn — and how. The result was the Lincoln Plan, a revolutionary plan-in-the-making that sees the whole network of district schools as a *single school with multiple learning sites*.

With the aid of two adult mentors — one from within the school and one from the community, most likely a parent or guardian — students are to design personal education plans that take them in and out of the various learning sites for interdisciplinary, thematic studies.

Students are not grouped according to age; there are no elementary, middle, or senior high schools. Rather, students from preschool to twelfth grade move among the sites (staying at one site as long as it is productive), maintaining a home base in a "cluster" or "studio" of 125 to 150 students and five to 10 district employees. Plans call for each cluster or studio to have "a variety of community participants and access to an inventory of community activities, resources, centers, and services."

Based on Research Too

The Lincoln Plan is, in effect, a byproduct of site-based, collaborative and participatory decision making. In connecting to what students learn, how, and in which time frames and settings, the plan is based not only on professional, community, and student input, but also on solid research.

"For any significant change to happen," Rauch said, "you have to base it on things that have proceeded both in writing and by example. In our particular case, we base [change] on Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory, knowing people learn in different ways and teachers teach in different ways."

As Lilian Katz, a consultant to the district and author (with Sylvia Chard) of *Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach*, noted: "If you use a single method of teaching a group of children that is diverse, you automatically condemn a significant proportion to fail."

And so it is, too, with site-based management: People who attempt to mandate a single method for all, without studying the core conditions and root causes of problems particular to each site, as well as the criteria for authentic SBM, automatically condemn to failure that which could be a powerful design for change.

SBM, as reviewed in Section One, is many different things to many different people, and when it fails it often is because old skills and mindsets are expected to drive new techniques and visions within the confining restrictions of rigid systems, mandates, rulings, and procedures.

SCENE TWO

A Practice in Name Only Hardens Egos, Creates Conflict

In its work to reinvent public education, Lincoln does not package its effort as a "site-based management" reform initiative and so may never turn up in formal studies of SBM or shared decision making (SDM). And yet it is a dramatic example of democratic governance used to revolutionize teaching and learning.

In contrast is a certain "site-based management" school in California. Not only has this particular effort failed, according to some of the teachers involved, but it also has created severe problems.

A science teacher at the school, who requested anonymity for himself and his school for obvious reasons, offered his concerns for what he believes, in theory, is a right-minded philosophy of governance.

It all began, the science teacher said, when the principal in effect told the teachers: "The school is broken. Work together. Fix it."

But How?

And then the nightmare began. Veteran and fledgling teachers, innovative and entrenched educators, were thrown together without training, without precedence, and without experience to transform a culture of isolated practitioners into a collaborative group of problem solvers.

Citing just one example of what resulted, the teacher noted that a new teacher, eager to impress, volunteered to take over the job all the others said they had no time for: to plan staff development activities. While training offerings were to be a decided by the group,

Traditions of the Chickasaw tribe deal with the universality of education. When there was a large undertaking, a large task to be done, the total village, the total community, was consulted because it wasn't a matter of one or two people making decisions. It wasn't up to the chiefs of the tribe.

The Lincoln Plan

Below are excerpts from *The Lincoln Plan: Another Milestone*, published by the Lincoln Unified School District in Stockton, California. They describe the beliefs that shaped the "visionary" umbrella under which the school district has involved all stakeholders, including students, in the key decisions determining what people learn, how, and in which time frames and settings.

The Lincoln Plan: Summary

In the central valley of California, near the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, a parcel of rich delta soil sits vacant awaiting the implementation of the final phase of The Lincoln Plan. The design for that site is now in the hands and minds of the students who will learn there and who, since the fall of 1991, have walked on the site with their teachers and community mentors, and talked, imagined, and shared ideas and feelings. They were the first to imagine The Lincoln Plan.

Now, their ranks include students from elementary, secondary, and alternative programs as well as graduates and dropouts. There are students with special needs, and students who are new to this area, this culture and country.

Their mentors are familiar parent leaders and parents of newcomers, young parents of kindergartners, and parents of second-generation Lincoln families, grandparents and retired adults.

There are local merchants and entrepreneurs; political leaders; representatives from law enforcement and community health organizations; staff and students from university and community colleges; teachers, instructional aides, support staff, and board members from Lincoln and other school districts; employees of community agencies and members of youth organizations and service clubs. Each month brings new visitors from out of the county and out of the state.

At the first public meeting for the planning of this new site, which we call The Brookside Project, a representative of the local Tribal Council said:

> Traditions of the Chickasaw tribe deal with the universality of education. When there was a large undertaking, a large task to be done, the total village, the total community, was consulted because it wasn't a matter of one or two people making decisions. It wasn't up to the chiefs of the tribe. It was up to the community and the villages to make the decisions which affect the well-being and welfare of the people. The education system among our native people begins with the earth. It begins from the creation, learning to read what is around us, preserving it. The kind of process beginning to take place here is very relevant. To see the diversity of people coming together is very traditional to me.

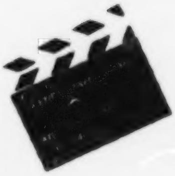
Proponents of The Lincoln Plan agreed that the planning process should exemplify the kind of learning experiences that ought to happen in all classrooms — those classrooms we have on existing sites, and those that are yet to be designed.

This unique joint venture between community and school district has picked up additional momentum because it is congruent with several other movements that collectively point to a transformation of the school system. The faculty and staff at Lincoln High School competed for and were awarded a California State Department of Education grant to plan to restructure.

As a result of their planning efforts, the restructuring curriculum committee of students, staff, and parents, working concurrently with the Brookside project planners, recommended that the "traditional walls which isolate and alienate students, parents, and community be eliminated" and that "a system be implemented to allow individual diversity and communal support."

A Tradition of Involvement

Site-based management plans at several district schools reflect movement toward various models of reorganization, with common themes of curriculum revision and



The Lincoln Plan, Cont.

altered teaching methods. A district tradition of decentralized management and powerful, teacher-driven curriculum committees seeded change by creating a potent force of teacher-manager-inventors. In short, a unique set of circumstances conjoined to create broad-based support of a master plan to reform the system.

There is an optimistic consensus that it is possible to design and implement in Lincoln Unified a new system which helps **all** students *develop their full potential and realize their great value to a democratic society as informed, literate and effective citizens.* Planners believe this system should prepare all students to be effective in the world of work and to experience personal fulfillment. All of our participants are concerned with *increasing numbers of students who are not being served by a system which is curriculum-driven rather than student-driven.*

A large constituency has developed around these beliefs, and with it a common commitment to momentous system transformation.

This constituency, our change agents, believe that:

1. Schools need to be **more personal** and everyone needs to feel better about being there.
2. Learning needs to be **more real and more connected to life**.
3. Students need to be involved in **developing alternative plans**, sequences, and options.
4. Nurturing a **sense of belonging in each student** must occur by increasing opportunities for relationships to develop with community members and organizations, college students, retired adults, older peers, volunteer parents, teachers, and staff, through projects, community classrooms, and service in the community.
5. Reorganization of sites and systems needs to occur so as to increase flexibility, enhance access and facilitate options for **choice and movement**.
6. Resources need to be reconsidered to facilitate **interdisciplinary, theme-oriented curriculum**.
7. Additional **alternative methods of demonstrating mastery** must be provided for students, including, but not limited to, portfolios, performances, and exhibitions.
8. The elementary school must be recognized as providing the best model upon which to build **student-centered, powerful learning experiences**.
9. Inclusion concerns and connection with community and citizenship issues are best addressed in a **pre-K through post-twelfth grade configuration**.
10. Our mission should be to develop great human beings who are valuable contributors to a local, state, national, and global society by creating a **system of learning centers** which collectively accommodate and enhance the learning strengths and intelligences of every student.
11. A **district master plan must be devised** which provides a community learning environment for all students with equal opportunities for movement and choice among them.

The process in which we are engaged is, in itself, a **model for powerful learning**. As we make meaning through cooperative problem-solving, we are discovering and applying our model. *In the process we learn about how people learn best, how powerful learning experiences feel, how "connectedness" affects learning, and how "real" curriculum develops and feels.* We have learned a great deal about what the community really believes about knowledge and expects of its schools.

The most powerful learning experience for all participants, however, has been the discovery of how great, productive, positive, and powerful a force students can become in a community that demonstrates by its actions that children and youth have the same value as adults.

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the new teacher nevertheless saw to it that the topics they could select from were the ones she deemed most important.

It wasn't long before the veteran teachers began to grumble: "Who does she think she is telling us what we need to know?"

In his school's case, the science teacher said, site-based management created hostilities that could take years to resolve. People with strong and hardened professional egos were not able or ready to develop the trust needed to respect opposing viewpoints, to neutralize conflict and contentious relationships, and to adopt new roles. In failing to meet the criteria for authentic site-based management, this school is not alone.

Good schools need to be small, they need to be autonomous, they need a clearly defined and communicated vision, they need parent involvement, they need site-based management, they need to work like true communities.

— Seymour Fliegel

SCENE THREE

The Good, the Bad, and the Typical: Giving Authority with the Reins Held Tight

In his book, *Horace's School,* Theodore R. Sizer, chairman of the Coalition of Essential Schools, a national reform effort founded on the belief that simple yet flexible structures must allow teachers and students to work and learn in their own appropriate ways, describes his visits to two schools. One was engaged in meaningful, site-based management and collaborative work, and one was not.

In the successful school, Sizer wrote, "the give-and-take was open, sometimes raucous, often funny. The tensions among the black, white, and Hispanic teachers were patent, but there was a softness in their display; race and ethnicity were OK topics for these colleagues, evincing more respect and friendship among them than suspicion.

"The conversation swirled, more or less superintended by a staff member near a blackboard. I learned later that she was chairing the meeting simply because it was probably her turn and she had happened to sit by the blackboard."

At the faculty meeting at the second school, Sizer added, "the principal spun out a string of announcements. Introductions were made. The teachers with their active red pens continued correcting [students' papers], boldly in full view. Some others more furtively read books. One veteran teacher off to the side opened a newspaper. Most of the rest, the majority, simply watched."

Unfortunately, Sizer noted, rituals analogous to the second school "abound in the system at large." To illustrate, he cites the case of a large city school district that decided it needed to create "school site management," which he defines as "the deliberate delegation of administrative power to individual schools."

A Good Idea, But . . .

"Wisely," Sizer noted, the district "sought to give greater authority and flexibility to those professionals who knew their students better than did anyone else. However, the device by which this devolution was effected was deliciously, if sadly, ironic. It was promulgated by the superintendent after virtually no prior consultation with any of the schools' principals.

"Schools wanting to be 'autonomous' would have to apply for the privilege, following detailed guidelines of who in their school community had to be involved and precisely how. Central staff would decide which schools 'won' the right to 'manage' their own sites, and would monitor their progress thereafter. Simply, authority was to be delegated only in the precise manner which the central authorities defined that it might be delegated."

This large city school district had failed to rethink traditional power structures and allegiances. For change to take hold, people need not only to take on new roles and responsibilities, but also to "unlearn" and unravel the steadfast reasonings that cement the status quo. As Sizer contends:

"Serious school reform depends on our ability to change the way we think about learning and growing up and schooling. That is, reform is not a matter of reorganizing the resources now available in schools and school districts and states. Rather, we must look

deeper, challenging some of the central ideas that originally shaped our schools."

Such was the case in one of New York City's toughest neighborhoods: East Harlem.

SCENE FOUR

For the People, By the People: the 'Miracle' in East Harlem

In 1973, Anthony Alvarado, at age 31, was named superintendent of Community School District 4 in East Harlem, one of New York City's poorest and most crime-ridden neighborhoods. Only 16 percent of the students were reading at grade level. Dropout rates were high, truancy rates were astronomical, and demoralized teachers were frequently absent.

"Indiscipline, violence, deteriorating physical plants, and monstrous bureaucratic indifference had all combined to create a failing school district," said Seymour Fliegel, the Richard Gilder Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute's Center for Educational Innovation, in *Miracle in East Harlem*, a book he wrote with James MacGuire.

By 1987, things had changed dramatically. Twenty-six new schools with new and distinct philosophies had opened. Sixty-three percent of the students were reading at grade level. The district rose from 32nd to 15th place among the city's school districts. Dropout and truancy rates declined dramatically. And teachers and parents held a renewed interest in their schools.

The Miraculous Way

"There is an apocryphal story about an old man who was asked how to change our schools," said Fliegel, who was named the district's first director of the Office of Alternative Schools in 1976. "He replied that there are two choices: the natural way and the miraculous way. The natural way, he asserted, is if a band of angels comes down from heaven and transforms them. The miraculous way is if a group of teachers, working together, do it."

This, said Fliegel, is the "miracle" of District 4. "Simply put," he explained, "District 4 freed students, teachers, parents, and educational administrators to work together to build what they all truly wanted: schools and a school system that put children first."

District 4 is often cited in the literature as the premier example of parental choice. But District 4 could be cited also as a premier example of site-based management, without which choice may not have succeeded. As Fliegel stressed in his book: "Just changing the rules so that parents can choose schools does not guarantee that there will be schools worth choosing. Only the slow and often arduous work of freeing all the players in the system and the system itself to create good schools will do the job."

What Good Schools Need

Good schools, Fliegel said, "need to be small, they need to be autonomous, they need a clearly defined and communicated vision, they need parent involvement, they need site-based management, they need to work like true communities."

Fliegel credits the movement's beginnings to pioneers like Deborah Meier, "one unusually dedicated teacher" who "had an idea for a school that would cater to the special needs of chronically undereducated and troublesome kids."

"Starting a new school that did not fit in with established procedures would normally have been almost impossible," Fliegel said. "But nobody really wanted these kids, and ... because the local district authorities were desperate to try anything that might work, the teacher was allowed, even encouraged, to start a small, experimental school."

In the face of sustained struggle, Meier opened one of the first three alternative schools in District 4 in 1974. With the authority to hire a staff to design its own curriculum, Meier brought to fruition her educational vision for "open classrooms organized around a theme." By 1983, there were 24 alternative schools, based, in Fliegel's words, on "a willingness to let people do their best instead of forcing them to cope with the system at its worst."

Fliegel's role throughout the process, he said was "as a buffer to protect the alternative schools from the system so as to encour-

Local School Councils: Critical Role, Critical Issues

In **Chicago**, teachers, school administrators, parents, and other community representatives sit on local school councils that are elected each year and empowered by law to develop school improvement plans, devise and adopt the local school budget, and hire and fire building principals.

In **Kentucky**, local school councils, elected annually in a 2:3:1 ratio (two parents, three teachers, and the principal/administrator), are responsible for setting school policy that will enhance student achievement and accountability. While the principal remains the instructional leader of the school, the council, in collaboration with the local school board, has a role in making decisions regarding instructional materials and practices, student support services, and scheduling, curricular, technology, and evaluation decisions.

Councils are empowered to determine personnel budgets based on a lump-sum figure given by the school board. Councils have a voice in personnel decisions but cannot recommend transfers or dismissals. School principals are selected by the councils from a list of recommendations made by the superintendent.

And in **West Virginia**, council membership includes three teachers elected by the faculty senate of the school, two school service personnel chosen by their peers, three parents of students enrolled in the school elected by the parent-teacher organization, two at-large members appointed by the principal to represent local citizens and business and industry, and a student in schools with grades seven or higher.

The councils, which are required to meet at least once each grading period and to focus on improving teaching and learning, are intended to encourage parental involvement, solicit advice and suggestions from business, promote volunteer and mentor programs, and encourage use of school facilities for community activities.

This is a sampling of how local school councils (also known as school site councils, management councils, and accountability committees) look in districts throughout the country, according to AASA's *Local School Councils*. As a rule, local school councils are as different as the situations for which they are designed.

Some Caveats

"If they are organized to provide advice on policy and to counsel those charged with ultimate responsibility for the governance and administration of local schools, then their contributions can be valuable," the publication states. "If, on the other hand, they are organized in a way that leads to time-consuming conflict, power struggles, and an ongoing lack of clarity about who is responsible for what, then they can actually become a distraction, leading to frustration, a lack of focus and accountability, and the loss of talented professional educators."

Local school councils need to know what they are expected to do on any given issue: provide advice, offer alternatives for consideration, perform a task, or make a decision. To be successful, the publication notes, several concerns need to be addressed, such as:

- **Accountability.** Who will be held responsible for decisions made?
- **Roles and relationships.** Just how do councils fit in with superintendents, school boards, principals, and teachers?
- **Uniform policy.** Can the best interests of all students in a community be met when dozens or hundreds of councils or boards go their own ways and compete for scarce resources?
- **Principals' responsibility.** To what extent is the principal beholden to the local school council?
- **Educators' professionalism.** How does an educator weigh day-by-day professional judgment against the council's ideas, decisions, and advice?
- **Training.** How do you prepare a council to reach consensus and collaborate?
- **Communication.** How do you communicate with each other to build trust?
- **Decision making.** Do local school councils have the right to make certain decisions and will they have the resources to implement them?

age them to take advantage of their new freedom."

He took on the bureaucracy, the school board, teachers, principals, and activist parents. He retained the support of two superintendents, Alvarado and his successor, Carlos Medina, blunted union opposition by keeping its leaders informed in advance of upcoming changes, and won the budgetary "cold war" with the central board of education by inviting its financial officer to see the school in action for himself.

Fliegel's book, *Miracle in East Harlem*, details his contentious relationships with all the warring factions in the school district and his tireless efforts to shield the alternative schools from bureaucratic interference.

Fear of Democracy

Meier remains passionate about the importance of giving teachers, parents, and children ownership in their schools. But for one reason or another, she said, the prevailing perception is that "neither school teachers nor parents nor local citizens can be trusted to collectively and democratically set goals and standards for their schools nor monitor their own work."

"We've become suspicious of such often flawed democratic processes. We've forgotten that wonderful phrase, that everything's wrong with democracy except its alternative. And we've become enamored of all alternatives of centralized expertise backed by scientifically designed assessments by the unregulated private marketplace."

"But God forbid," she added, "that the people who are closest to the schools, parents, teachers and local citizens, not to mention children, should muck it up."

SCENE FIVE

Townsfolk at Town Meetings Help Shape a School's Vision

In 1990, the Waialae Elementary School became the first school in Hawaii to implement School/Community Based Management, a legislative initiative to involve faculty, staff, parents, students, administration, and community in the work of school renewal.

SCBM, according to a publication on the Waialae Elementary School effort, "is based on faith and trust in people. It is the meeting of minds and hearts, coming together to create a community of learners, dialoguing, forming a common language, checking out perceptions, debating, sometimes disagreeing, but always focusing on the common base of what is best for students and their learning. SCBM stresses collaboration and shared decision making as the basis for establishing an environment for creative teaching and learning."

SCBM in Waialae involves three groups: the SCBM Open Forum, the SCBM Council, and SCBM task forces. The SCBM Open Forum is essentially a populist form of governance — anybody and everybody is invited to "town hall" meetings to discuss Waialae's vision and policies.

Issues discussed are decided by consensus, the Waialae document explained, "when members agree on a decision and each group member can honestly say: 'I believe that you understand my point of view and that I understand yours' [or], 'Whether or not I prefer this decision, I support it because it was reached fairly and openly. It is the best solution for us at this time.'"

If a consensus is not ready to be taken, or cannot be reached, the SCBM Open Forum can refer the matter to the second group, the SCBM Council, which in turn can assign a task force to study the issue further.

Representative Government

The SCBM Council is, in effect, a form of representative government, composed of the principal and members of the six segments of the school community: teachers, support staff, students, parents of Waialae students, and other community members. The Open Forum may decide to let the SCBM Council resolve the issue, or ask that it be brought back to the Open Forum for resolution. If the SCBM Council cannot reach consensus, it resolves the issue with a two-thirds vote.

The SCBM Restructuring Project involves more than governance and decision-making structures, however. Frequent workshops, coffee klatches, and town hall meetings are held to prepare people for change by discussing key educational issues.

For example, the district sought a waiver from Scholastic Achievement Tests after educating the community about alternative assessment systems. "We, as parents had a lot of concern about that," said one woman involved in the SCBM effort. "But once we got to understand why educators wanted to stop giving the SAT, and what they wanted to replace it with, we were sold."

Through the SCBM Restructuring Project, Waialae established for its children a vision that they be creative problem solvers; self-confident risk takers, well-rounded (capable of multiple dimensions), and collaborative and socially responsible to others and the world.

A Living Document

This was not, however, a vision determined by a group of 15 people on a weekend retreat so that it could hang on a plaque in the principal's office. Rather, Waialae's vision is a living document that connects education programs and policies to what a community believes its young people should know and be able to do as a result of their schooling.

To be a creative problem solver students said that among other things they had to "listen carefully and follow directions, work hard," and "be alert."

Of particular interest is how the mission is shared with students. Yvonne Wakata, a third-grade teacher, was skeptical when she asked her students to come up with terms for translating the vision into learning objectives against which they could eventually be evaluated. "It's amazing what these kids came up with," Wakata said. "I was floored."

To be a creative problem solver, for example, Wakata's students said that among other things they had to "listen carefully and follow directions, work hard," and "be alert."

To be a self-confident risk-taker: "Don't think you're junk because you really might get better."

To be well-rounded and capable in multiple dimensions: "Be flexible in body and mind."

And to be collaborative and socially responsible: "Treat other people how you want to be treated" and "first come, first served unless the first person says it's okay to switch."

Long-Term Commitments

The team from Waialae stressed that the venture is working mostly because a principal, her staff, and the community she serves are committed to it — for the long term. Success, the principal said, "will take five to 10 years, and we can't expect that our student achievement will skyrocket after one or two years. But we're pleasantly surprised. I didn't expect it this soon, that the caliber of work coming out would be much higher."

Waialae is an example of a district that takes the attitude that trust — not power — and initiative and empowerment — not complacency and entitlement — are essential to drive educational change. With leadership that champions risk takers, Waialae is reaching out to communities inside and outside the schoolhouse to share and gather ideas for improving teaching and learning.

Not all school communities, however, are ready to engage in such advanced site-based management work. For many districts, the first imperative is to make the peace between warring parties. Such was the case in a small district in New Jersey.

SCENE SIX

A Superintendent Involves Staff To Heal Hostilities

Most graduates from Montgomery Township, a small, relatively affluent, central New Jersey school district, go on to college. Test scores are high, programs are on the cutting edge, teachers are effective.

"From just that hearing, I'm sure you conjure up an image of a very good school district, motivated kids, generally supportive parents, good staff members. That's true," said James E. Henderson, director of the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders at Duquesne University.

"What was also true," Henderson added, "was that labor relations in that school district were contentious at best, and there were predictable by-products of low staff morale, disenfranchisement, and ineffective interpersonal communications." One scenario, Henderson said, "just didn't jibe with the other."

A Year of Labor Strife

In May 1989, he noted, the board of education

SBM in Five School Districts

In preparing the report, *Decentralization and Accountability in Public Education*, a RAND research team in 1989-90 and 1990-91 visited five school systems that had adopted site-based management (SBM).

In Columbus, Ohio, site-based management at the district level and shared decision making at the school level were instituted as part of a comprehensive reform plan adopted in 1989 to combat failing public schools.

- The initiative in the mid-sized urban district resulted from a joint effort by the school board, teachers union, superintendent, parents, and community members.
- "Scout" schools tested the concept, received extra funding, and through an SDM cabinet exercised greater control over their budgets, professional development, student discipline, accountability measures, and physical plant. The SDM cabinet, including teachers and parents, was chaired by the principal. Decisions made by simple majority vote were binding; the principal's veto could be overridden by a two-thirds vote.
- All Columbus schools were to practice some form of shared governance through the establishment of Association Building Councils (ABC) composed of four faculty representatives — two chosen by the principal and two by the faculty — and a union representative. The ABC was responsible for producing the school's annual reform plan based on input from various constituencies and an analysis of districtwide data provided by the central office. In scout schools, the SDM cabinet (including one ABC member) was to establish the reform plan and to appoint ad hoc teams to study implementation strategies.

In Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, a district of 195 urban and suburban schools, site-based management was driven by Superintendent Michael Strembitsky. He believed that running a school system was much like running a large corporation, in which decentralizing decision-making authority and initiative stood as a sound management practice.

- When the concept was introduced in 1976, it was called school-based budgeting to reflect a narrower focus, which soon expanded, to include a much wider range of issues.
- In controlling budgeting, schools that kept utility costs down could spend the savings as they chose; schools that spent more than what the central office allowed for would have to pay the difference.
- Principals could have other teachers or administrators fill in for absent teachers. The unused substitute teacher funds could be spent as chosen.
- A pilot program gave schools money to "buy" services that the central office had previously provided for "free," such as a math expert, a school psychologist, or a social worker. Schools could buy these services from the central office or from a private provider.
- Administrators at the district and school levels were urged to seek (but were not bound by) advice from groups likely to be affected by the resulting decisions. Because the central office held principals accountable for school affairs, principals were to have the final say.

In Dade County, Florida, the nation's fourth-largest school district, then-Superintendent Joseph Fernandez and Pat Tornillo, the teachers union executive director, campaigned tirelessly for a site-based management initiative that has received much publicity — both good and bad.

- The motivation for SBM and shared decision making was the professionalization of teaching.
- With approved waivers in school board rules, teacher labor contract provisions, and State Department of Education regulations, SBM/SDM schools restructured the school day, created smaller classes, designated new teaching positions and functions, and implemented a host of other changes to improve student achievement and school effectiveness.

SBM in Five School Districts, Contd.

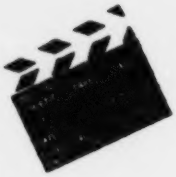
- SBM/SDM schools received the same level of funding as non-SBM/SDM schools and allocated the money through an SDM cadre. These SDM cadres were configured differently from school to school and went by different names, such as senate, educational cabinet, governing council, and program improvement council.
- Each school had a central decision-making body of usually five to 12 members that acted on issues that "trickled up" through committee, subcommittees, or task forces. Cadre decisions for the most part were made by a simple majority vote. The principal could veto but had to consult with the United Teachers of Dade steward or provide a written rationale.

In Jefferson County, Kentucky, the nation's 17th largest school district, school reform and restructuring began in earnest in 1981, when Donald Ingwerson became the superintendent. He faced local business community concern over failing public schools, declining federal support, racial tension, court-ordered busing, and middle-class flight.

- The superintendent and the Gheens Professional Development Academy (a joint effort by the school system and the Gheens Foundation, a local endowment committed to education and community development) played major roles in the reform effort. It provided schools with several different approaches to school restructuring, each of which emphasized participatory management involving both site-based management and shared decision making.
- By the spring of 1988, groups from schools throughout Jefferson County were working with the Gheens Academy on four approaches to school reform and restructuring: Professional Development Schools (based on the work of Phillip Schlechty), the Coalition of Essential Schools (based on the work of Theodore R. Sizer), Learning Choices Schools (supported by U.S. Department of Education magnet funds), and the Middle Grades Assessment Program (developed by the Ford Foundation and the Center for Early Adolescence in North Carolina).

In Prince William County, Virginia, the SBM/SDM effort driven by Superintendent Edward Kelly was "a philosophy of management by which the individual school becomes a self-directed, responsible, and educationally accountable entity within the parameters established by the school board and the division superintendent, and where decisions are economical, efficient, and equitably facilitate learning."

- In the summer of 1988, five schools were selected to participate in the two-year pilot program. In July 1990, the central office implemented the program districtwide.
- The SBM/SDM program was driven by four goals: to improve the quality of education, to enhance the work environment for teachers and staff, to foster parental and community support, and to improve the decision-making process.
- The essence of site-based management was to transfer authority over the bulk of the district's operating budget to the school, giving the principal power to control roughly 75 percent of the school's operating budget; to establish the number of employees and the areas in which they will work; to hire all employees that report to him or her; to purchase all supplies; to structure the organization of the school; and to implement educational innovations.
- Although the central office had mandated that each school implement shared decision making and had provided some parameters for it, the specific details of the governance process were left to the individual schools. Each school, however, was to involve building administrators, teachers, parents, and students.
- The SDM body was to prepare and submit to the central office an annual plan for its school, against which waiver requests would be judged.



and the teachers union entered into a tentative bargaining agreement, "but a full 11 strife-filled months went by before a final contract was executed. The delay was caused by distrust on both sides and an inability to collaboratively resolve several minor, but important, contract-language issues."

Henderson knows the district well. On March 1, 1990, he became its superintendent. He inherited six labor cases pending before arbitrators and one case pending before a New Jersey administrative law judge.

His first day on the job, members of the Montgomery Township Education Association (MTEA) staged a protest at the school board meeting to assail the superintendent selection process.

There were other problems besides poor labor relations. "Discontent with government in general and with New Jersey Gov. Jim Florio's dramatic . . . tax reform package led many parents and community members throughout New Jersey to scrutinize public education costs very closely," Henderson said. "In April 1990, the Montgomery Township annual school budget was voted down for the first time in 20 years."

Mission Impossible?

Facing poor labor and community relations and budget difficulties, Henderson said the board charged him with getting the staff and community to work together in more productive ways. He decided to involve staff in school-based decision making, to tap into their creative and problem-solving abilities, and to ameliorate the obvious and widespread interpersonal turmoil."

Step one was to offer training in listening, speaking, and decision-making skills, an effort initially funded by the teachers union after a survey administered jointly by the district and the MTEA found that poor interpersonal communication was a most urgent issue. The goal was to train a critical mass (25 percent) of staff members, who then could formulate and operate quality circles at each school.

"Some of my administrators argued strongly for clearly defined and standardized operating procedures and scopes of issues to be and not to be discussed [by the circles]. I resisted that," Henderson said. "The only parameters I established were that the issues considered and decisions made could not violate the collective bargaining agreement, state law, and district policies."

At the district level, Henderson said, the Superintendent's Curriculum Advisory Council (SCAC) had become dysfunctional because "the folks who populated it were so eager to have some say in the organization that unfortunately they brought every issue in." A Superintendent's Advisory Council was formed to discuss workplace issues, freeing the SCAC to concentrate on curricular and instructional issues. Quality circles for clerical staff and maintenance and custodial staff, "who didn't feel completely at home in all of the other quality circles," were also established.

Effort Pays Off

Giving the staff greater decision-making and advisory responsibilities paid off, Henderson said. The six pending grievances and the issue before the administrative law judge were amicably resolved and settled out of court. Only one grievance was filed between 1990 and 1992 and it, too, was resolved without further contest.

A first-ever districtwide staff and school board family picnic was held in the fall of 1990 and repeated every year since. Staff and volunteer recognition programs and ceremonies were established, as well as team leader positions at each grade level.

"Clearly, interpersonal relationships in our district were improving," Henderson said, "and I think the acid test of that improvement was the board-staff contract negotiation activities begun in the fall of 1991."

Disillusioned with the protracted and unproductive bargaining of the past, association and board members underwent training in the "win-win bargaining philosophy," in which bargaining issues are listed in interrogative form, rather than as declarative demands. Within two months, Montgomery Township achieved a three-year contract settlement.

"Without having the school-based decision-making training and experience from which to draw, this outcome would have been much less likely," Henderson said. "Some would say impossible. School-based decision making truly does work."

We standardized discipline. Once, individual teachers often had to stay after school to take care of their own discipline problems. Now a teacher volunteers to supervise a group. It was a *very* beneficial thing. It took it out of a vice principal's hands and it freed teachers so that they could better schedule their time.

-- Linda Eckard, history teacher

In Montgomery Township, form followed function. Giving staff greater say in decision making was an attempt to improve working conditions and relations, without which, Henderson said, "[we could not] meaningfully decide whether to proceed with the more comprehensive task of making all budgetary, personnel, and program decisions at the local site level, obviously referring to site-based management."

Not all districts, however, have as much success with building a culture of collegiality. From them, too, valuable lessons can be learned.

Teachers not involved wanted to know: "Just what are you doing when you're meeting?" "You've collected all that data. When are you going to tell us something about it?

SCENE SEVEN

A District's Focus on Power Relations Runs Out of Time, Commitment

Silverville, a fictitious name given to a district studied by researchers Rodney Muth of the University of Colorado at Denver and Richard Segall, a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University, is described as a "mirror of the major problems in urban education."

The relatively small district (2,400 students, predominantly from minority groups) faced the pinch of poor student achievement, declining enrollment, desegregation mandates, and the demands of an aging, non-resident workforce. But it was because of its acrimonious labor history and confrontational political climate that Silverville was chosen as one of nine state pilot sites to test a model for restructuring power relations.

In 1991, however, the teacher-empowerment and collaborative decision-making project, in which the superintendent had played the unifying role, "died quietly, probably missed by a few participants," Muth and Segall said. The new superintendent, who had been the former assistant superintendent, simply "decided that the project would cease to exist."

No rationale was given for disbanding the districtwide team of teachers, administrators, and school board members. No discussion was held. And Muth and Segall wanted to know: Just why did a project that promised to facilitate cooperative relations among the district's teachers, building-level administrators, district-level administrators, and school board members die after three years — two years short of its intended lifespan?

The answers, the researchers said, "are neither as clear-cut nor as easy to divine as they might seem." Among the problems noted: Lack of visibility. Few quick and tangible results. Inadequate communications. Domination by teacher concerns. Uncertain commitment to change. Uneven teacher commitment. A sense of vulnerability among building-level administrators. Jealousy among district administrators over the team's access to the superintendent.

Too Much, Too Little, Too Late

Despite the shortcomings, there were signs of progress, albeit too much, too little, too late. "Over time," Muth and Segall say, "committee members became people first, then stakeholder representatives. Thus, as the committee matured, its members engaged in very good, constructive discussions, bordering on professional communications. Committee members seemed to want to make something meaningful happen to improve working conditions or student achievement. A common set of values around which dialogue took place and decisions were made emerged during the final project year."

And yet, Silverville's plan was doomed, for many reasons. As Muth and Segall noted:

- **Private knowledge was perceived as power.** Teachers not involved wanted to know: "Just what are you doing when you're meeting?" "You've collected all that data. When are you going to tell us something about it?"
- **The school board focused on its own prerogatives.** "The majority of the board simply was unwilling to contemplate ever relinquishing any of its power to other groups, even in exchange for its pronounced goal of increased student achievement."
- **A union commitment drove most teachers to participate.** Although a few "became committed participants and project advocates, the others never developed a commitment to TECDM and to its underlying principles, thus leaving their

individual schools with no meaningful contact with the process."

- **Charges of elitism surfaced because of insufficient communication.** "People thought that the group was doing things to perpetuate itself and to promote the interests of its members, not the interests of the groups they represented . . ."
- **Jealousies arose.** "No central office administrator had a fraction of the continuous time with the superintendent as did the members of the committees in its various work groups."
- **Suspicions brewed.** "Perceptions grew that the committee was ignoring its primary job — fixing the district's perennial problems — to pursue some ethereal relationship goals."
- **Teachers valued being with students.** "Teachers who attend conferences or take part in full-day meetings leave their students in the care of substitutes who are viewed by most as babysitters. At some undefined point, time out of the classroom can signify abandonment of the children and the educational mission."
- **No links were made to other reform efforts.** An effective schools process started a year before TECDM was established had been progressing well in two schools, championing small-scale projects with clear focus on incremental improvement."Neither the superintendent nor the consultants, however, wanted to contaminate either process with the other."

What Went Wrong?

Silverville is an example of what happens when change is burdened with uncertainty, and no group, as Muth and Segall noted, finds results "acceptable enough to release old beliefs and to risk forming new relationships."

"Inevitably," the researchers said, "loyalty to the contract remained sacred, and the power of the board remained intact. The inability of any group to generate change fostered a sense of impotence. This, in turn, manifested itself in power struggles to force compliance or to resist compliance for self-preservation."

The Silverville effort appeared to be more about improving adult relations and working conditions, with too little attention paid to what many people say should matter most: the children and their education.

That was not the case in New Haven, Connecticut, where members of a university-school partnership used collaborative work environments to make the classroom connection. They did so out of necessity: Children living in poverty, "underdeveloped and differently developed," were missing out on their one best shot for coping with economic and social distress — a good education in a caring community with parental support.

SCENE EIGHT

Collaborative Work Environments Driven by the Needs of Children: The Comer School Model

In 1968, James P. Comer and his group from the Yale Child Study Center entered two New Haven elementary schools characterized by a "culture of failure." Ninety-nine percent of the students were black. They were poor. They lagged 19 months behind in language arts and 18 in mathematics by the fourth grade. They were considered to have the worst behavior in the city.

By 1977, the two schools were achieving at grade level. By 1988, the schools were tied for the third- and fourth-highest levels of achievement and the best attendance in the city, and there were no serious behavior problems. The students were more than a year above grade level in language arts and mathematics.

"I'm going to sound like we knew what we were doing," Comer said at the AASA annual meeting in 1993. "Truth is, we didn't know what we were doing. As a result, the place exploded in the first year. Too many changes were brought about. We had too little understanding of the problem, and we didn't use process.

"What we learned very quickly is that you can't mandate change, you can't say we're going to do this differently and tell people to do it differently and expect them to do it. We also learned that you can't just talk about child development and the needs of children and expect people then to figure out what to do and how to respond differently, that it takes more than that.

A Process of Change

"We realized that you had to create mechanisms that would allow all the stakeholders to carry out and engage in a process of change at a rate and in a way that they could tolerate. That if you move too fast, if you push too soon, people will back up and you'll get resistance and an explosion. So we had to put in place mechanisms that would allow the process to take place."

In "desperation, just to survive," the first thing Comer and his team did was to create a governance management team of parents, teachers, and administrators.

"Out of that initial group," Comer said, "evolved a nine-element program with three mechanisms, three operations, and three guidelines that allowed us to gradually change the school and put the staff and others in control of that change."

The mental health team "reduced the fragmentation, the duplication, and the inefficiencies" of the mental health-care delivery system by assigning social workers, psychologists, and special education teachers to the school at the same time, so they could work together. The focus was on prevention, to make the "rules, regulations, and procedures in the school child-friendly and based on what we knew about child development."

The parents group worked to get parents involved in governance and management, in carrying out the social programs of the school, in the day-to-day activities of the school, and in increasing the general turnout of parents to school affairs.

"We went from having 15 parents turn out for the initial Christmas program to having 400 parents attend four years later. There were only 350 kids in the school," Comer said. "We had similar results in many of the schools we are in now. These are parents who are not supposed to care about school, who are not supposed to be interested in coming to school."

The school planning and management team was responsible for creating a comprehensive school plan, to design staff development based on that plan, and to assess and modify that plan on an ongoing basis according to changes in the school. Recognizing that change is dependent on turning around a school's culture, which Comer describes as the way people work and feel, the team established three guidelines:

- **Collaboration is imperative.** "There had to be genuine collaboration within the school in all the things we were trying to do," Comer said. "The group could not paralyze the principal, and the principal could not use the group as a rubber stamp."
- **Decisions should be made by consensus.** "When you vote," Comer said, "you have winners and you have losers, and often the losers will say, 'Well, it was your idea, you wanted it. You do it,' and in that way you don't have the cooperation and support of all the members of the staff." Instead, Comer said, every decision was gauged "on what seems to be good for children, what are children like, what are their needs, and how do we provide [for] them and how do we support them."
- **No fault will be assigned.** "We didn't spend our time blaming people for the problem. We didn't blame the children for the problem. We didn't blame the parents for the problem. We didn't blame the staff for the problem. We focused on addressing problems as they occurred."

In Conclusion. . .

How site-based management looks often depends on why it begins: a union contract, a state mandate, a district directive, a charismatic leader, a community's collective vision. In presenting eight scenes of collaborative work environments, this section has reviewed some of the many different interpretations of site-based management, highlighting what works (high involvement) and what fails (contrived collegiality), as well as what is likely to succeed (substantive change) and what is likely to fail (symbolic tinkering).

These examples from the field support the contention that to reflect the uniqueness of each school setting, site-based management requires attention to personal, interpersonal, managerial, and organizational issues.

Waialae (Hawaii) Elementary School

School/Community-Based Management

In 1990, Waialae Elementary School became the first school in Hawaii to implement a program of School/Community-Based Management (SCBM). Below are excerpts from a booklet published on the initiative by the school, highlighting the vision, procedures, guidelines, character, preparedness, and benefits that define the effort. (Bold-faced type has been added.)

School/Community-Based Management (SCBM) is a system that enables a school's community — principal, teachers, staff, parents, students, and other interested citizens — to actively and directly shape the quality of education offered to its students. SCBM is both an organizational structure — one that shifts authority from a centralized agency or department to individual schools — as well as an ongoing process that actually changes traditional roles and relationships within a school.

The power of SCBM to improve our educational system is based on these important concepts:

1. That local schools can perform their tasks better when they are allowed more administrative flexibility.
2. That students in those schools will benefit when each school's community is empowered to make decisions that will directly affect the school and its students.
3. That decisions are more effective when made closest to the point of implementation.

This move away from a centralized and standardized school system is prompted by the belief that members of an individual school's community possess the expertise and competence to decide what is best for their school. They have the most first-hand experience and are right there to witness how a program is faring and how it might be improved.

School/Community-Based Management is based on faith and trust in people. It is the meeting of minds and hearts, coming together to create a community of learners, dialoguing, forming a common language, checking our perceptions, debating, sometimes disagreeing, but always focusing on the common base of what is best for students and their learning.

SCBM stresses collaboration and shared decision making as the basis for establishing an environment for creative teaching and learning. Consensus is part of shared decision making. It is an accord or general agreement that exists when participants commit to support a decision and its implementation.

A group reaches consensus when members agree on a decision and each group member can honestly say:

- "I believe that you understand my point of view and that I understand yours."
- "Whether or not I prefer this decision, I support it because it was reached fairly and openly . . . It is the best solution for us at this time."

Through the collaborative process, each participant comes away changed in some way by the group effort and interaction. It's a process which cannot operate within a strict set of rules or a tight structure. Throughout its inherent ambiguity it forces participants to be more involved and innovative.

What the larger community is experiencing through their collaborative efforts is exactly what we hope the students at Waialae will also learn: collaborative working styles and non-traditional problem-solving techniques. As the world changes, our children will need to be able to think and operate using more flexible and versatile approaches which take into account group dynamics and interdependency.

The vision at Waialae is to restructure our learning and teaching environments in order to prepare our children to be creative problem solvers, self-confident risk takers and well-rounded individuals who are responsive to others and the world around them. The Waialae SCBM Restructuring Project provides a viable answer to our educational needs and sets forth

Waialae (Hawaii) Elementary School, Contd.

specific procedures and guidelines for achieving the desired restructuring.

The primary focus of the project is on innovative teaching approaches, assessment strategies and learning processes which take place in the classroom. The project is supported by extensive research about child development, how children learn and the environments which foster children's learning. It is based on studies which show that the most effective way to teach children is to capitalize on their natural inclination to learn through play: interactive experiences, moving, touching, exploring and fully interacting with their world.

To achieve the desired teaching and learning objectives, the project incorporates opportunities for professional development for teachers, schoolwide changes in our curriculum framework and student assessment system as well as parental involvement in the learning/teaching process.

Specific benefits of the project are as follows:

- A developmental/interactive learning environment which will foster success for every child, encourage creative and cooperative problem solving, multi-levels of creativity and the ability to interpret, integrate and apply a vast array of skills and knowledge to their world and personal experiences.
- A teaching environment which will provide teachers with the autonomy, time and professional development opportunities necessary to create the desired learning environment.
- An interdisciplinary, theme-based social studies/science curriculum framework which will provide developmentally appropriate and interactive teaching strategies and learning experiences.
- A multi-dimensional student assessment system based on shared achievement targets and performance criteria which will qualitatively and quantitatively measure student achievement.
- A parent program which will create a supportive and effective school-home partnership.

Henderson County (Kentucky) Schools

Mission, Goals, Principles, and Beliefs

The Center for Leadership in School Reform, directed by Phillip Schlechty and based in Louisville, Kentucky, works to help school districts think through the key issues surrounding site-based management initiatives. To illustrate the complexity of the task, the center offered this sample of a school district's work in drafting its mission, goals, principles, and beliefs:

Mission Statement

The mission of the Henderson County Schools is to prepare and enable each student, through the shared commitment of the home, community, and school to be a lifelong, self-directed learner having the capacity to think, reason, and participate fully in a diverse society.

System Goals for 1993-1994

- Begin continuous planning for school improvement through the broad-based participation of school and community people in a Strategic Directions Task Force.
- Emphasize the improvement of student performance through working with the site-based decision making councils in the school improvement planning process.
- Develop plans to achieve equity in resources, services, support, and learning opportunities in all schools for all students.
- Work toward full implementation of the SBDM process while respecting both the autonomy of each school and the integrity of the total system.
- Improve the communication between the home, school, and community in all matters that relate to educating students.
- Incorporate the spirit and intent of the system's mission and beliefs in daily practice at every level of the organization.

Commitments and Principles

The home, community, and schools must collaborate to provide the programs, services, support, and environment necessary for all students to be successful.

Because the schools belong to the community, the school system must welcome and seek the participation and opinions of both the parent and nonparent by providing appropriate opportunities for communication.

Decisions will be made based on what is best for students and as close to the point of implementation (e.g., system level, building level, individual school, elementary level, secondary level, grade level, program level, classroom, etc.) as possible. Every decision will be judged on how it contributes to successful student performance.

Because learning is a lifelong process, the school system has the responsibility to work with the community in determining needs for lifelong learning opportunities.

Cooperation, trust, teamwork, honesty, openness, and fairness are core principles in the system. All those who are affected by the system will be able to count on all those within the system who make decisions to uphold these principles.

The school system will provide a work environment in which two-way communication can flow freely, and concerns and problems will be addressed quickly. Risk taking and innovation will be encouraged. Teamwork will be a condition for successful student learning.

Beliefs About Students

Students are the primary customers of the school system. Each student is a unique individual who has different needs that must be met to enable them to experience success each day. The school system must meet these students' needs in order to satisfy the needs of parents, nonparents, business and community leaders, teachers, and other personnel.

Education should be a positive experience that develops a lifelong desire for learning. Students need to experience success each day.

Henderson County (Kentucky) Schools, Contd.

All students can learn at higher levels than those at which they are now learning if presented with the right opportunities, support, and sufficient time.

All students have the right to develop in a challenging, caring, and nurturing environment in which they are safe physically, mentally, and emotionally. Each student should be helped to develop a spirit of cooperation, respect for others, and feelings of self-worth.

Education should be a positive experience that develops a lifelong desire for learning. Students need to experience success each day. Thus, students must be challenged to stretch themselves beyond their present capacities and they must be provided with support and encouragement when their initial efforts fall short of what is expected.

Students should be empowered to make choices which create a positive vision for self, to set priorities and achievable goals, and to evaluate their progress.

All school activity should focus on meeting the needs of the student through the type of work that is provided. The purpose of the work should be to enable students to master new knowledge and demonstrate that learning and knowledge in real-life situations.

Beliefs About Staff

Every person employed by the school system is expected to be a leader. Consequently, each employee has a responsibility to guide and influence students positively, and to cause them to engage actively in meaningful and productive work.

The Henderson County Board of Education and the superintendent will be held accountable for the success of the school system. Therefore, the board and the superintendent will take the lead and responsibility in the development of the system's vision, mission, beliefs, and goals. They will initiate a process of continuous planning for the system's focus and improvement.

Each staff member is expected to demonstrate support for the mission, beliefs, and values of the school system through what they say and do each day.

Each staff member is expected to be a lifelong learner and must become a model for the students they serve. The importance of each staff member pursuing continuing education opportunities is critical to the initiative of improving student achievement.

The Superintendent's top priorities are to serve as the chief spokesperson about education to the community, to educate the community about education, and to develop leadership through the system.

System-level staff are responsible for supporting, encouraging, and assisting building-level staff in the development of programs and services to meet the needs of students. They will provide and facilitate research-based materials, programs, and best practices that will ensure that quality decisions are made.

Building principals are responsible for providing leadership to their schools in meeting student needs within the context of the system's mission, beliefs, values, and goals.

Teachers are responsible for designing work that responds to the needs of the students they serve. Teachers, then, must be empowered to lead students in doing their work.

Beliefs About Parents and Community

The family is the first line of support for students. It is the family's obligation to ensure that the child has the support needed to be successful in school. Parents are expected to help their children to succeed by sending to school well-disciplined "young people" who are receptive to learning.

The community has a responsibility to provide support to all students to help them be successful in school. School system staff should work with the child and youth-serving agencies in the community to guarantee that each child and family has the support needed when family resources are limited or inadequate.

The continuous involvement and support of parents in their children's learning and work will be encouraged and guided by school leaders and staff, both at the system and building level.

Henderson County (Kentucky) Schools, Contd.

The school system, families, and all community groups and agencies that serve children and youth in Henderson County should form collaborative, networking relationships that are child-centered and focused on meeting the needs of all young people.

All community members benefit from high quality schools that produce successful students. Therefore, all community members benefit from making an investment toward the realization of high quality schools that contribute to a better quality of life.

Beliefs About Governance

The schools belong to the community. The board of education is the elected representative voice of the community for governing the school system.

The board of education's top priorities are (1) to provide overall parameters for school operation by establishing a mission, beliefs, and policies; (2) to provide the necessary resources for schools through local taxation; (3) to employ the superintendent; (4) to lead in the development of strategic planning for the system; and (5) to lead in educating the community about education.

The board of education has the primary responsibility for seeking the community support for children whose resources are limited.

School councils are the elected representative voices of the parents and staff of each school. Guided by system policies and other legal parameters, the school council should have the authority for the governance of the school. The school council's primary responsibility is to develop policies for the operation of the school that will contribute to improving student success.

Consistent with the school system's belief that decisions should be made as close to the point of implementation as possible, schools can best be governed at the building level within the overall parameters of the school system, state laws, and state regulations.

Participatory management should be practiced at all levels of the system — within the system, each school, and each department. Processes will be established to ensure participation in system-level decisions by all staff and all schools.

Each school in Henderson County operates in the context of the Henderson County School System. Both the system and each school have mutual responsibilities to each other. The superintendent and the Board of Education must create a climate and support structure that allows each school to function autonomously within system parameters. The decisions of each principal and school council should demonstrate support for the total system.

The Henderson County School System and each school within the system have defined areas of responsibility, authority, and roles within which they may choose to operate independently. Better decisions for all concerned will be made if there is a spirit of collaboration and shared philosophy in seeking the best solutions in the school improvement process.

Beliefs About Quality and Accountability

All policies, programs, practices, and procedures of the system should be judged against the twin standards of excellence and equity and on how they will impact students' achievement.

The quality of the experiences provided to students will primarily determine the quality of student work. Quality experiences are defined as those that best guarantee that each child will learn what he or she must learn to benefit from and participate in a diverse society in which global competition is a reality and democracy is a way of life.

Quality must be defined in terms of meeting all the customer's needs. Quality education must first meet the needs of the student, but must also meet the needs of the parents, the community, the work place, and society.

The quality of work done by students is based on the quality of leadership they are provided in doing that work. All employees of the Henderson County School System should be leaders who are expected to focus their work on contributing to student success. Each student, parent, employee,

Henderson County (Kentucky) Schools, Contd.

and the community is accountable for student success.

Beliefs About Support and Innovation

Each employee should be committed to continuous improvement and will have a professional growth plan that is designed to bring about increased levels of student success. The school system is responsible for providing appropriate training opportunities and resources so this task can be accomplished.

Risk taking and innovative thinking are valued and will be supported. The lessons learned from such efforts, even those that fail, are of value to the individual and the system. Although the system strives to ensure that each child and each employee experiences success every day, the system will have a high tolerance for risk taking and for any resultant temporary setbacks.

The superintendent and board of education have the primary responsibility for obtaining the necessary resources to support system programs.

Principals and school councils have a role and responsibility for supporting and assisting the school system in obtaining resources for their schools. This includes the coordination of all resources available to the school. This would consist of system allocated funds, grant funds, federal funds, activity funds, booster organization funds, PTA funds, and any other funding sources. This will ensure that all resources are focused on meeting school needs, with the focus always being on improving student achievement.

Section 3

Conditions for Success

Site-based management is often seen as a reform of abrupt beginnings and intense demands. This section offers a sampling of thoughts concerning the personal, interpersonal, managerial, and organizational issues of decentralization, as well as the training and accountability issues raised in collaborative work environments.

Section Highlights:

- **Mindsets** explores the misconceptions that arise from the confusion, friction, and fear associated with change.
- **Climate** raises the point that site-based management is not something you do and finish; it involves cultural change.
- **Empowerment** discusses the relevancy of the human factor in the context of change and professionalism.
- **Leadership** addresses the demise of command and control and the call for transformational leadership.
- **Organization** argues that the governing metaphor of schools needs to be community.
- **Vision** looks at a concept that is too often misunderstood and misapplied.
- **Implementation** calls for an awareness of the stages of change, with particular attention to the "courtship" phase.
- **Reorientation** stresses that in creating new habits of mind and heart, it is important to manage transitions.
- **Reinvention** is about learning the lessons of change.
- **Renewal** discusses ways to "walk the talk."
- **Reconceptualization** reviews the new roles and responsibilities required to make site-based management work.
- **Preparedness** is about the training needed to build the knowledge, skills, and desire to break with traditional assumptions and values.
- **Accountability** raises a series of questions to be asked in evaluating the effectiveness of site-based management.

Mindsets

In Bellevue, Washington, decentralization and participation had been part of the public school district's dialogue for years. But that was not enough to quiet the "confusion," "anxiety," "friction," "fear," and "animosity" evoked by a 1986 agreement that replaced an advisory model of school-based decision-making — in which administrators seek input from teachers and others — with a consultative model — in which administrators seek approval.

These were the conclusions of Betty Malen of the University of Washington, who studied the school-centered decision-making effort spawned and sponsored by union leaders and district officials. The agreement held that employees would have to participate in school-based advisory and developmental groups, with administrators being allowed to make "interim decisions" only when "appropriate participation" failed to produce a "sufficient consensus."

In reporting on Bellevue, part of the University's Claremont Graduate School's Project VISION (a study of emerging patterns of labor relations, work life, and school organizations), Malen cited several reasons for the negative reaction:

- People were caught unaware and off guard.
- People were not sure what the provisions meant. (Was this a watershed agreement that significantly altered power relations, or was it a minor modification of previous arrangements?)
- It was ironic to have a democratic concept imposed by autocratic action.
- People were tired of shifting from one innovation to another (of having to take, as one person put it, "one more pet project so that the district could keep looking like it was still a progressive place").
- The feeling among some people was that they were ill-equipped, unprepared, and in need of training to participate effectively.
- Principals saw it as an "absolute power grab" that stripped them of positional authority while holding them more accountable.
- Teachers resented the extra work, new responsibility, and working with parents as equal partners.
- Teachers believed that the union was setting them up to bear the burden of budget cutbacks and transfers.
- Central office administrators were skeptical: What does it mean to be less directive, more facilitative, and will we be so busy getting everyone involved that nothing gets done?
- Members of the board of directors were concerned over what formal authority they were delegating and what legal responsibility they might be abrogating. As one member said: "We were reluctant to give up the perception of power you have when you sit at the top of the system."

Confusion and Anxiety

These and other reactions, Malen said, "reflect the confusion, contention, suspicion, and fear that tends to surface when ambiguous, ambitious changes are injected in stressed, strained organizations. And they reflect the anxieties and uncertainties that tend to erupt when the changes being advanced signal a redistribution of power and authority in the organization."

To "quell resistance and generate support," Bellevue learned what other districts and schools involved in site-based management discover either through their successes or failures: Without close attention to the conditions for success, negative reactions can become crucial challenges under which collaborative work environments falter and fail.

A View from the Classroom

In the view of one veteran teacher, it wasn't easy, but it was well worth the effort.

Deborah Nissen, whose last eight years in Bellevue was spent adjusting to site-based management, feels now that she would have a "hard time" going anywhere else where there was no SBM, adding, "It *is* a lot of work, though, and it *takes* a lot of time."

As she recalled the early days, "In the beginning, we had to work on the details — especially consensus and team-building. All of the talking and training took about two years. Then we rewrote the language in the third year — to be more specific in the areas of consensus-building and to be broader in the scope and authority of the site-based council."

Nissen feels the most positive thing about SBM in Bellevue is that "*all* staff members — not just the teacher — take part in the budgeting process and in deciding what kind of program we're going to run." Beyond that, she said, the inclusion of parents in the task force and the decision-making process was the most far-reaching move of all.

Despite all the good intentions, she recalled, it took a long time to learn the process and reach the point where everybody trusts one another. There's always the danger, she said, of getting "bogged down in picky details," like scheduling or deciding who hands out the yearbooks.

Reaching Consensus

Bellevue's site-based councils consist of parents, students, teachers, instructional assistants, office staff, aides, and custodians. They define "consensus" as when a person says he or she, at the very least, can "live with a decision" although still disagreeing with it.

"We also have to reach a *sufficient consensus*," Nissen explained, "which means that perhaps two out of 50 people have indicated they *cannot* live with a decision. Then the principal will come up with an *interim* decision. We try to compromise to reach something that *everyone* can live with. Then the group is required to revisit that decision to see if there are any accommodations that can be made to make it easy to live with."

The Need for Training

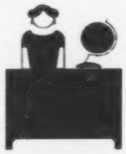
In the AASA survey conducted for this report, administrators were asked to consider: *If you have implemented site-based management and could start over again, how would you do it differently?* In general, the overwhelming response was to provide more and better training. Clarifying roles and responsibilities, having a strategic plan and vision, and moving slowly and giving the effort time to jell were also frequently noted in the write-in responses, a sampling of which is offered here:

> A lot more time needs to be spent on training staff, explaining the concept and getting their involvement.
>
> I would define clearly what decisions are site and which are central.
>
> Spell out in detailed/specific language as to the delineation of responsibilities between school boards and school-based councils. This is not the case in Kentucky and it is causing problems. It must be addressed.
>
> Form a large knowledge base so that all district people know what it is that could be done and what the benefits will be for students. It is important to have large numbers of the staff, the board of education, and administration be strongly convinced that the program will be highly effective in meeting students' needs.
>
> Involve central office from the start.
>
> Involve some students.
>
> Move committed teachers to pilot schools.
>
> Don't change superintendents in mid-stream.
>
> Give it the time it needs — and it does need time.

Issues To Consider

What these and other comments by administrators involved in site-based management show is that effecting systemic change requires attention to personal, interpersonal, managerial, and organizational issues. Success requires thoughtful reflection on:

- **Purpose.** The reason to act.
- **Leadership, management, governance, and power.** Who acts and when, who gets others to act and why.
- **Knowledge and skills.** Building the capacity to act.
- **Data-based decision making.** Knowing what to act upon by collecting, analyzing, sharing, using, and building upon relevant and timely research and site-specific information.
- **Rewards and incentives**. Motivating people to act.
- **Inner convictions**. Maintaining the will, the moral imperative, to act.
- **Professionalization**. Sustaining the expectation that individuals will act not just to succeed at their own jobs, but to see that the system as a whole prospers.
- **Partnerships and alliances.** Tapping into the expertise and human and organizational resources of community, business, and higher education groups to support and advance site-based management efforts.



There's always the danger of getting "bogged down in picky details," like scheduling or deciding who hands out the yearbooks.
— Deborah Nissen

Most important, for site-based management to influence what students learn, how, and in which time frames and settings, it is imperative that the link be made to teaching and learning. "If you leave it implicit, it's the last thing to get attended to and probably doesn't get attended to," said Michael G. Fullan, dean of the faculty of education at the University of Toronto.

"The ultimate test," Malen said in her report on Bellevue, "is whether all of this work and trauma and effort will produce improvements in student learning."

In discussing the risk of "process paralysis," Malen noted the concerns of district administrators: That "you can get so hung up on how you are working as a group that you don't get to what you are doing for the kids, the school" and that "people are really trying, there is no doubt about it . . . But very few are knocking heads over instructional issues . . . The reform continues to be process, process, process."

Climate

Misconceptions about decentralization, Malen said, fuel many of the barriers that block decentralization efforts. In turn, poorly implemented initiatives — those with faulty, unclear, or unrealistic expectations and with poorly equipped, committed, and trained participants — do little to correct these misconceptions.

In the AASA survey, respondents were asked: *In your opinion, what are the greatest misconceptions about site-based management and decision making?*

Among the responses were that there would be an *automatic improvement in student achievement;* that *radical, rapid change will take place;* that SBM *is a quick fix that takes little work and minimal training; that there is only one model: the staff-community takeover model;* and that SBM *is the be-all and end-all of restructuring.*

One respondent noted his concern with a prevailing belief that *including many people in the planning and decision-making process will automatically lead to better decisions, or, conversely, to chaos, failure, anarchy, and mutiny.* Another respondent said it is faulty to believe that an *organizational concept (decentralization) can be separated from the skills necessary to make a "practice of management" (participatory decision making) operationally effective.*

Restructuring Isn't Enough

Perhaps the greatest misconception about site-based management is that changing the governance structure — or even mandating a change in the governance structure — means that the job is done; the system is "restructured;" the district is "doing site-based management."

As Fullan, in referring to the work of Milbrey W. McLaughlin, put it: "You can't mandate what matters, because what really matters for complex goals of change are skills, creative thinking, and committed action." In the 1993 yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Fullan added:

> Another reason that you can't mandate what matters is that you don't know what is going to matter until you are into the journey. If change involved implementing single, well-developed, proven innovations one at a time, perhaps it could be blueprinted. But school districts and schools are in the business of implementing a bewildering array of multiple innovations and policies simultaneously. Moreover, restructuring reforms are so multifaceted and complex that solutions for particular settings cannot be known in advance.

In keeping with the logic that "you can't mandate what matters most," it is not enough, said William G. Cunningham of Old Dominion University, to manipulate or modify job descriptions, organizational structure, evaluations, reward systems, staff development, leadership, or even curriculum. Without a corresponding and supporting change in culture, reform will be ill-fated.

The central tenets of an effective work culture, one that values "respect, confidence, self-esteem, high expectations, and commitment," Cunningham said in a paper on cultural leadership, "are face-to-face interaction, individual efforts, vision and optimism, collegiality, values and interests, diverse perspectives, personal and professional development, long-term focus, continuous improvement, and performance information."

While this thinking "runs against the tide of past literature," Cunningham said, it is "very much in agreement with recent moves toward participatory approaches to leadership" and has proven successful in reform and restructuring efforts.

Establishing a Culture

In his own work, Fullan, a noted expert on educational change, makes a distinction between "restructuring" and "reculturing." The latter refers to the work of establishing a culture conducive to change in which "values, beliefs, norms, and habits of collaboration and continuous improvement" are evident.

"In most restructuring reforms," Fullan said, "the structure attempts to push cultural change, and mostly fails." Moreover, he added, "rapidly implemented new structures create confusion, ambiguity, and conflict, ultimately leading to retrenchment." What is more powerful and meaningful, Fullan said, is when "teachers and administrators begin working in new ways and, in the process, discover that school structures must be altered."

Empowerment

In many people's views, it is not possible to have authentic and effective site-based management without empowerment. And yet some people cringe at the word "empowerment," especially in communities where labor-management hostilities are deep-rooted and long-standing.

In reporting on their national study of school-based — management, — Priscilla Wohlstetter and Susan Albers Mohrman noted that "most districts that instituted SBM through collective bargaining (such as Dade County, Florida, and Los Angeles) provided teachers with majority representation on site councils. In doing so, districts simultaneously decentralized power to schools and elevated teachers' influence to higher levels in the organization."

"It may be, however," the researchers added, "that group empowerment is not the most effective means of school management. Studies of effective public schools agree that a strong central leader, like the principal, is key to successful management . . . A few districts (such as Edmonton, Alberta, and Prince William County, Virginia) have empowered the school principal under SBM. This model also is used by independent elite schools that tend to have high student achievement: power belongs to the head."

Some people prefer not to use the value-laden term em***power***ment; instead they use the term "enablement" or "professionalism." But whatever it is called, empowerment could be the key to avoiding the retrenchment Fullan talks about and to making the link to teaching and learning.

Some people prefer not to use the value-laden term empowerment; instead they use the term "enablement" or "professionalism."

Teacher 'Power'

For example, in the Jefferson County Public School District in Louisville, Kentucky, teachers were told they were empowered, so a team of sixth-grade teachers in a school serving a blue-collar community decided to break the rules and do what they felt was right for students. They decided that all students would finish their assigned work even if it meant that the teachers would have to drive the students home from school, stay late, or work a longer school year.

"To make a long story short," said Donald W. Ingwerson, former Jefferson County superintendent, "the end of the school year came and out of 127 sixth-grade students, 26 of them hadn't finished the work. The next Monday morning, those 26 attended school. That sent a message that teachers had power, right through that community and right through those kids. By the end of that week, all but one of those students completed all the requirements . . . That may be a little thing to us, but to have a team of teachers able to do that, that's power in their eyes."

Thomas Chenoweth and James Kushman of the Center for Urban Research in Education at Portland State University, noted that in Henry Levin's Accelerated Schools restructuring model, decision making with responsibility, also known as empowerment with responsibility, means that "those who know the school best and are closest to the classroom have a say in the development of the school's curriculum, instruction, and organization."

The idea, the researchers added, is that "as staff and parents feel increasingly responsible for student success they will avoid blaming others for school problems."

Lip Service?

Despite such attempts at empowerment, Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Improvement of Teaching, believes that "we haven't confronted seriously the talk about teacher empowerment, or seriously the talk about school-based management, or seriously the issue of reasonable working conditions that would make this on a day-to-day basis a profession of power and dignity."

In a speech at the 1993 ASCD annual meeting, Boyer, a former U.S. Commissioner of Education, added:

> We haven't kept up with the corporate thinking here that in the end there's nothing there but workers. The best industries in America are now understanding you don't improve by regulation or by speeding up the assembly line. You improve by recognizing it's the human power and human resources that make any institution work.

Cunningham defined empowerment as "expanding your knowledge, testing your skills, learning from mistakes, and generally expanding your notion of what you have to offer to schools." Empowerment, he added, "is awakening all the power within the individual, within the organization, and encouraging both to achieve greatness. Empowerment is discovering, developing, and releasing the capacities that are within all employees and thus within all organizations."

Effective organizations will encourage empowerment and self-governance to walk hand-in-hand.

— William G. Cunningham

In this respect, empowerment is closely entwined with site-based management, which rests on the premise that the best decisions are made by the people closest to the situation at hand. "To achieve collective power," Cunningham said, "we must develop personal power and assure that it is aligned with a shared vision for an ideal school. Effective organizations will encourage empowerment and self-governance to walk hand-in-hand."

Leadership

Empowerment, in that it embraces the concepts of shared governance, participatory management, and collaborative work environments, forces a rethinking of traditional power structures and allegiances, calling to question what leadership is, who has it, and how it can be used to build capacity for continual school improvement.

"I've spent most of my career working with principals, some superintendents, and some supervisors, and the very conception of who is a leader [has] quite rightly vastly expanded over the last couple of decades," said Gordon Cawelti, former executive director of ASCD, in delivering the First Annual Cawelti Leadership Lecture at the 1993 ASCD annual meeting.

"In fact," Cawelti added, "teachers are more and more needing to become leaders."

This is not to say, however, that there is no strong leadership role for administrators. As a report by the National LEADership Network Study Group on Restructuring Schools noted:

> Empowerment of others means not to abandon the responsibilities of leadership, but to *fix in others, on whom the job rests, both the sense of direction and the responsibility for its achievement.* Since no leader can compel or control effective action of subordinates in such circumstances, what must be done is to locate the impetus for effective performance in the people who must do the work.

Empowerment, then, is not to abandon the responsibilities of leadership, but, as Cawelti put it, to "provide a series of experiences that will galvanize other people to action." As an administrator in Texas noted: "You don't diagnose problems and give solutions. You allow people to articulate for themselves what the problems are and what the solutions ought to be."

Such a view is "very different from the way I envisioned leadership in my first two or three jobs, where I really thought I was to be the fountain of knowledge," said Cawelti.

James E. Mitchell, superintendent of schools for the Adams Twelve Five Star Schools in Northglenn, Colorado, agreed. In his facilitator's guide to site-based decision making, Mitchell noted:

> I was a very traditional administrator when I became a junior high principal in the late '60s. My father was a role model for me. Although a very benevolent high school principal . . . he never would have believed in site-based decision making. On the other hand, my mother, an English teacher, would have been a staunch supporter . . . In wanting to become a building principal, I was intrigued by the ability of being able to make decisions for a school, build a master schedule where I could manipulate and control the lives of many, and be paid big bucks in addition. Little did I realize in the '60s that ten years later I would completely change my attitude toward how schools should be administered that — power comes from being able to allow others to participate in making decisions, which bring[s] more self-worth and satisfaction than being the one solely responsible for determining the well-being of others.

But is this issue always addressed adequately in practice? Michael Schoeppach, who has seen SBM progress "quite well" over the years as union representative in the Bellevue, Washington, schools, thinks not.

The problem, he said, is that when true school-based management exists, the principal's role changes from "boss" to "coach." And that may not be reflected in the way the district does business. "A serious underestimation is often made of the changing role of the building administrator," Schoeppach added. "In a situation that works, it's the council that should be held accountable — *not* the building administrator."

A similar comment came from a veteran teacher in the Bellevue system. Deborah Nissen, who has taught language arts and social studies for 20 years — the last eight under SBM — observed, "The principal and assistant principal almost have to rethink their jobs. I think it's worse for them than the staff and teachers. They have to rethink their whole job description. It's no longer from the top down."

Organization

According to Thomas J. Sergiovanni of Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, "the time has come to take a hard look at the basic theories and root metaphors that shape the way we understand schools and shape the way we understand leadership and management within them."

In arguing that the governing metaphor for schools needs to be community, Sergiovanni, in an address delivered at the 1993 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), spoke first of the "organizational theory and behavior that educational administration borrows [from in crafting its] fundamental frames for thinking about how schools should be structured and coordinated, how compliance within them should be achieved, what leadership is, and how it works." As Sergiovanni noted:

> To organize means to arrange things into a coherent whole. First there has to be a reason for organizing. Then a careful study needs to be done of each of the parts to be organized. This study involves grouping the parts mentally into some kind of logical order. Next, a plan needs to be developed that enables the elements to be arranged according to the desired scheme. Typically, this is a linear process. As the plan is being followed it becomes important to monitor progress and make corrections as needed. And finally, when the work is completed, the organization arrangements are evaluated in terms of original intentions. These principles seem to apply whether we are thinking about organizing our bureau drawers or our schools.

In arguing that "metaphors have a way of creating realities," Sergiovanni noted that not all groupings of individuals can be characterized as organizations; there are families, communities, friendship networks, and social clubs. "Changing the metaphor for the school from organization to community," he said, "changes what is true about how schools should be organized and run, about what motivates teachers and students, and about what leadership is and how it should be practiced." He added:

> Communities are socially organized around relationships and the felt interdependencies that nurture them. Instead of being tied together and tied to purposes by bartering arrangements, this social structure bonds people together in special ways and binds them to concepts, images, and values that comprise a shared idea structure . . . Communities are defined by their centers of values, sentiments, and beliefs that provide the needed conditions for creating a sense of 'we' from a collection of 'I's.' . . . Instead of rely-

ing on external control, communities rely more on norms, purposes, values, professional socialization, collegiality, and natural interdependence.

The ties of community also redefine how certain ideas, such as empowerment, are to be understood. "In organizations," Sergiovanni said, "empowerment is typically understood as having something to do with shared decision making, site-based management, and similar schemes. Within communities, however, empowerment of teachers, students, and others focuses less on rights, discretion, and freedom, and more on commitments, obligations, and duties that people feel toward each other and toward the school."

Vision

How can schools become more like communities and less like organizations? Many people would say the shift begins with a vision, or what some people might call strategic planning or a mission statement with goals and objectives. Too many people, however, hammer out a mission statement over the course of a weekend and expect that the work is done.

So contend Carl D. Glickman, author of *Renewing America's Schools: A Guide for School-Based Action*, and Michael Fullan, who noted that while visions are necessary for success, "few concepts are as misunderstood and misapplied in the change process." In the 1993 ASCD yearbook, Fullan wrote that visions come later. They evolve through the process of change for three reasons:

1. People need ***reflective experience*** before they can form a plausible vision.
2. ***Shared vision***, which is essential for success, must evolve through the dynamic interaction of organizational members and leaders. This takes time and will not succeed unless the vision-building process is somewhat open-ended.
3. ***Skill development*** is essential because without skill, vision remains superficial.

Reshaping Visions

In keeping with Peter Senge's contention that "organizations learn only through individuals who learn," Fullan maintained that "the critical question is not whether visions are important, but *how* they can be shaped and reshaped, given the complexity of change."

"Deep ownership," he added, "comes through the learning that arises from engagement in solving problems. In this sense, ownership is stronger in the middle of a successful change process than at the beginning, and stronger still at the end than at the middle or beginning. Ownership is a process as well as a state."

Too often, though, Glickman wrote, school practices are shaped not by vision, but by policies that "are undemocratic in their creation and implementation. Policies are not decided by those who will be affected, do not represent the people in the school community, and are not derived from the vision of the people. Most ideas in education derive from power, popularity, or novelty. These ideas temporarily hold sway, but within a few years they pass away and become tired innovations that failed."

In his work with the League of Professional Schools, Glickman, executive director of the Program for School Improvement at the University of Georgia, talks about the need for a *covenant* (the principles of teaching and learning), a *charter* (the constitution for governing), and a *critical-study process* (a way of setting priorities for future actions on the basis of self-study). To clarify further:

- "A vision is what we would like to imagine," Glickman said. A *covenant* is a "sacred obligation" that should be "reconsidered and revisited periodically, but it is where a school plants its feet, the place from which it will not be moved. From it emanates a mission, goals, and plans." To be authentic, Glickman said, a *covenant* must be derived from all the people who are affected through a democratic process and be focused solely on what teaching and learning should look like. Then it should "be a guide for future decisions about school priorities with respect to such matters as staff, schedules, materials, assessment, the curriculum, staff development, and resource allocation."
- The *charter*, Glickman said, "is an understanding of how decisions are to be made. It spells out who is to be responsible for what, the composition of decision-

making bodies, the decisions to be made, and the process to be used." It is not important to adopt a certain model, but for a school community to develop "its own model consistent with democratic principles, appropriate to the organizational readiness of the school, and in line with the recent history of the school." Glickman does, however, offer three guiding rules: "Everyone is to be involved in decision making, no one *has* to be involved, [and] once decisions are made, everyone supports the implementation." Once a *charter* is developed, it is wise, Glickman said, "to seek a trial period of at least a year, so that it can be reviewed and revised."

- For school renewal to endure, Glickman said, schools need "to develop the *critical-study process* (what some people call action research, reflective practice, or collective inquiry) so that information infuses the raising and studying of important questions about student learning."

As Glickman sees it, "one of the great difficulties in educational renewal [is] the tendency to view school goals and objectives as innovations to be implemented. Innovations will come and go, as they should, but educational goals and objectives for students that are derived from the *covenant* will endure, as they should."

Implementation

From conception to institutionalization, a reform effort takes on a life of its own, passing through many developmental stages. The key issue is to ensure continuity and advancement in times of training, testing, turmoil, turnover, and change. Of particular concern are the "hesitancy gap" (the crisis that can occur as a school moves from theory to the reality of implementation) and what Fullan calls the "implementation dip" (the period in which things get worse before they get better).

"As people rethink their organization and its purpose, function, and activities, they move outside the secure and the known. While changing students' lives, they will be changing their own lives as well," Glickman said.

"Predictably," he added, "when consensus on the ideal is reached, the plan starts to break down in the details of personal change: 'What? You mean I will have to move to another room?' Members then slow down their initial enthusiasm for bold change and find it easier to say, 'Let us think more about this. Maybe we really should not do it.'"

Accelerated Schools

Chenoweth and Kushman reviewed a four-phase change model developed in their work to help implement Henry Levin's Accelerated Schools in three "sister" elementary schools in a Northwestern urban district. Using Richard F. Elmore's typology of school restructuring models, the researchers describe Levin's Accelerated Schools model as:

- **Reforming the occupational conditions of teaching** (in that it creates a school organization where teachers assume greater responsibility for identifying and solving the school's problems, and for cultivating their own teaching practice as well as the practice of their peers).
- **Reforming relationships between schools and their clients** (in that it stresses building an inclusive school community that engages parents and other community members as partners).

Accelerated Schools, the authors noted, "are elementary schools designed to bring all students up to grade level by the end of elementary school. The schools are driven by the motto, 'accelerate, don't remediate,' and a premise borrowed from John Dewey, 'What we want for our children, we must want for all children.' Accelerated schools are founded on the belief that the key to student change is through the development of staff and community knowledge and capacity for inquiry into school problems."

Chenoweth and Kushman also noted that "Accelerated Schools are organized around three governing bodies, which together form a site-based management structure." Through a systematic, problem-solving, inquiry process, cadres of staff and parents identify school priorities. A steering committee (the principal and representatives from the various cadres) sets policy and convenes cadres as needed. And thirdly, the entire staff and all parents are called to meet to endorse or vote on policies that will effect the entire school.

The Four-Phase Model

In their work on the leadership team for the three sister schools, Chenoweth and Kushman conceptualized a four-phase model of implementation:

- **The courtship phase**, in which initiators of the reform engage school staffs in a discussion of the need for change and a model for change, and in the end garner the initial commitment and support needed to embark upon a major school transformation.
- **The training and development phase**, in which school staffs receive training in the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required for the model to succeed, such as group process and meeting skills, using an inquiry process to identify and solve school problems, developing norms of collegiality and continual improvement, and understanding new instructional and curricular practices.
- **The structural and cultural phase**, in which changes are introduced, experimented with, and refined for a particular school site, such as implementing a new governance structure, increased parent and community involvement, and creating a collaborative and team-oriented work culture.
- **The classroom practices phase**, in which structural and cultural changes penetrate into the classroom and lead to changes in curricular and instructional practices.

Chenoweth and Kushman stressed that attention to the courtship stage, which may "be described by others as 'wooing' or 'selling,' is essential, especially in school-based change projects initiated by external parties, such as central office administrators working with university facilitators."

In referring to the work of Fullan and Seymour B. Sarason, author of *The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform*, the researchers note that for change to take hold, "people at all levels (teachers, parents, principals, and district administrators) must assimilate the change into their own construction of reality and their own belief and value systems." Chenoweth and Kushman added:

> A major challenge of successful implementation is to integrate the various individual subjective meanings of the key participants into a *shared* meaning and a shared school culture. This challenge begins as early as the courtship phase because while the initiators of the change may have already assimilated its meaning and developed a vision of what *they* want to accomplish, the teachers, staff members, and parents coming into the project may lack a clear sense of what the reform means to them or their school. There may also be competing ideas of what needs to be done in the school and how this particular reform effort will help.

Courtship Activities

Major courtship activities for the three sister schools included dissemination of written materials and videotapes about Accelerated Schools; short presentations and interactive exercises designed to introduce Accelerated School concepts; a presentation by Henry Levin; visits by teachers to Accelerated Schools in operation; and a long-distance conference call with the staff of one school involved in the effort.

Such activities, Chenoweth and Kushman noted, "must be recognized and underlined," for "reformers who ignore the meaning of change from the various stakeholder perspectives do so at their own peril, because concerns, issues, and differing points of view left unaddressed in the early stages can result in a loss of commitment and even sabotage in later stages."

Reorientation

Perhaps one of the greatest leadership roles and challenges in school renewal work is to manage change and transitions. In her definition of transitions, Judy-Arin Krupp, president of Adult Development and Learning, integrates two concepts, those of William Bridges and N.K. Schlossberg. "A transition," Krupp wrote in a 1987 article, "is a natural process of disorientation and reorientation, caused by an event or nonevent, that alters the individual's perception of self and the world, demands a change in assumptions or behavior, and may lead either to growth or to deterioration; the choice rests with the individual."

No matter what terminology is used, Krupp said, "individuals appear to go through the same three stages during any change. They experience *endings*, the *neutral zone*, and *new beginnings*. These stages occur in any order, take time, sometimes overlap, and bring their own problems and joys."

Referring to the work of Bridges, Krupp notes that "endings" have four natural aspects:

- **Disengagement** — a break with the familiar.
- **Disidentification** — a loss of self-definition that can cause panic, deep thinking, and analysis.
- **Disenchantment** — the discovery that one's sense of some part of his or her world has been fallacious.
- **Disorientation** — a feeling of confusion, of being stuck.

The "neutral zone," described as a "time in hell," is the stage we try to hurry through, Krupp said, "but rapid passage through this stage may preclude appropriate problem solving. Individuals in the neutral zone need to stay in this uncomfortable place long enough to learn from themselves about themselves."

And "beginnings" is a time that demands "integration of the new with the old — new behaviors, new relationships, and new self-perceptions with past behaviors, relationships, and sense of self." Every beginning brings new relationships, Krupp added, and "the change upsets old arrangements and tacit agreements on which the individuals based their relationships. Emotional manifestations of these changes include belligerence, anger, bewilderment, striking out, and forgetting."

The National LEADership Network Study Group on Restructuring Schools recognized the importance of managing transitions. Their study on "new habits of mind and heart" talks about the "molting period," a time in which people "must throw off old behaviors and dispositions before new ones are fully formed." During this period, "restructuring schools are vulnerable, waiting for the new structure to strengthen sufficiently to accommodate the new mission and context."

Reinvention

In this current era of educational reform, touched off with the 1983 release of the report, "A Nation at Risk," many schools and districts have been successfully engaged in the work of endings and beginnings. Many more, perhaps, have languished in the neutral zone. Taken together, these stories of success and failure can be woven into a legacy of lessons learned for successful change.

In the 1993 ASCD yearbook, Fullan discussed eight such findings, summarized here:

1. **You can't mandate what matters.** To be productive, change requires skills, capacity, commitment, motivations, beliefs, insights, and discretionary judgment on the spot. If there is one cardinal rule of change in the human condition, it is that you cannot *make* people change.
2. **Change is a journey, not a blueprint.** If you try to match the complexity of the situation with complex implementation plans, the process becomes unwieldy, cumbersome, and usually wrong.
3. **Problems are our friends.** The absence of problems usually indicates that not much is being attempted. Smoothness in the early stages of a change effort is a sure sign that superficial or trivial change is being substituted for substantial change attempts.
4. **Vision and strategic planning come later.** Visions come later because the process of merging personal and shared vision takes time.
5. **Individualism and collectivism must have equal power.** Productive educational change is a process of overcoming isolation while not succumbing to "group think" — uncritical conformity, unthinking acceptance of the latest solution, and suppression of individual dissent.
6. **Neither centralization nor decentralization works.** Centralization errs on the side of overcontrol, decentralization errs toward chaos. We have known for

decades that top-down change doesn't work. Decentralized solutions like site-based management also fail because groups get preoccupied with governance and frequently flounder when left on their own.

7. **Connection with the wider environment is critical for success.** "Learning" schools know that there are far more ideas "out there" than "in here." Successful schools tap into these ideas and contribute to the demands of change that are constantly churning around in the environment.
8. **Every person is a change agent.** The conditions for the new paradigm of change to thrive cannot be established by formal leaders working by themselves. Each teacher has the responsibility to help create an organization capable of individual and collective inquiry and continuous renewal, or it will not happen.

Renewal

While it is important to prepare the organization and its people for change, eventually the change has to be made. To use an oft-repeated phrase, it becomes time to walk the talk. It helps to keep in mind three points:

- **Change starts within**, requiring a paradigm shift from "outside-in" to "inside-out." The "outside-in" paradigm, said Stephen R. Covey in his best-selling book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*, results in "unhappy people who feel victimized and immobilized, who focus on the weaknesses of other people and the circumstances they feel are responsible for their own stagnant situation." In contrast, "inside-out is a process — a continuing process of renewal based on the natural laws that govern human growth and progress."
- **Change is action**. Preparation is essential, but change, as Glickman put it, is about "developing an enduring, moral framework for educational renewal as a way of life and not as an innovation. You don't change the culture of a school by saying, 'Let's change the culture of our school.' You do it by starting to do something. You change a culture by people saying, 'I guess we don't have a clear set of core values. Maybe we should start to work on this.'"
- **Vision and visionary leadership are necessary, but not enough.** As Fullan noted: "Leadership books that say you work on the vision, you communicate the vision, you train for the vision, you evaluate the vision, and you reassess the vision sound attractive, but it doesn't work. It's the wrong paradigm." Whether a school culture is isolated, balkanized, or characterized by collegiality or collaboration, Fullan endorses the "ready, fire, aim" approach. *Ready* is finding something wrong ("our kids don't read well") and saying, "let's get started." *Fire* is in the doing (cooperative learning). *Aim* is formulating a vision that results from interacting, doing, and exchanging ideas. Vision can be measured according to the degree to which it is shared, the degree to which it is concrete (set in action), and the degree to which people are skilled in it.

Points of Entry

In the final analysis, each site (school and/or district) has its own history and needs to decide its own point of entry to change, whether it involves such things as strategic planning; action research; group training and awareness; reform models that offer guidelines (*not* prescriptions) for effective school-based plans; or partnerships and alliances with universities, businesses, or other community groups.

What these and other options have in common is adherence to the principle that people learn by doing and they do what matters, to themselves (intrinsic motivation) or to others (extrinsic motivation). A site could opt to choose one option, or a combination of options. The point is to determine what works best for a particular site given the personalities and conditions that define its work. Options for entry include:

- **Strategic Planning.** Some sites report that they spend an extensive amount of time (not just a weekend retreat) involving stakeholders in drafting a vision and mission statement for the school and/or district, creating a "living document" that influences and shapes all other decisions and actions and is itself subject to modification. The vision-setting process gets people to focus on interests, not positions, and to experience consensus building and participatory decision making in striving to address the most pressing schoolhouse needs. Participatory management/decision making becomes the *modus operandi* for strategic planning — the blueprint and direction for school activities, restructuring, and renewal — and not just another "feel-good" initiative competing with all other reforms and programs.

- **Action Research.** This involves the critical study of what happens in schools, adhering to the professional imperative that, as Glickman put it, "we should always be about the business of studying and deciding ways to make education better for kids." Action research is about reflective inquiry. It is the practice of identifying a pressing schoolhouse need and working together to define it, study it, and test and implement strategies based on the best of thinking "out there" and "in here." With results, the proof is in the pudding: working collaboratively on identified needs is worth the time and effort it takes because better solutions are found — and more likely to be implemented — if people closest to the problem have input into the process. As Edward Pajak, chair of the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Georgia, said: "Schools are teaching organizations by definition, but are not necessarily learning organizations. Most schools are designed primarily to transmit information; in other words, they are not designed to generate or invent it . . . The 1980s focused on getting schools to teach better. The future will require that schools learn better, as well."
- **Group Training and Awareness.** Some sites report that they would not take the first step toward decentralization without bringing together the various parties to air their differences and confront their power struggles. In many instances, outside consultants or groups are brought in to facilitate these "retreats" and/or training workshops. The intent is to get people to identify in a "safe" environment the personal, interpersonal, and professional tensions and skills that need to be confronted and developed, individually and collectively, to turn a group of "You's" and "I's" into a "We". Some people, however, like Joyce Epstein, advocate "less emphasis on experts and more focus on the creation of expertise." Preferred is staff development "of the staff, by the staff, for the staff," designed to improve schooling for students in incremental steps.
- **Reform Models.** In a business with too little time and too little resources, a jump ahead is not only nice, but also imperative. Fortunately, it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel; this is an era of reform models, many of which have extensive and proven track records and networking structures. These models, such as the Coalition of Essential Schools and Accelerated Schools, are not step-by-step directions for change, but guiding principles for action. Numerous reports on the characteristics of successful schools, such as the RAND report on "High Schools with Character," also offer insight into how to provide the focus and emphasis needed to advance a decentralization effort that answers the question: "Site-based management to achieve what?"
- **Partnerships and Alliances.** The university, Glickman said, is a place where people "can come and learn and discover matters that you wouldn't normally do in life away from the university." Likewise, corporate and community offices and workplaces are sites to visit to "shadow" life in other organizational settings to gain a greater insight into applicable and transferable strategies, viewpoints, and practices. Example: The League of Professional Schools, in which the focus of study and discussion is the school site itself, bringing university researchers and school-based practitioners together. Also: The JCPenney High Performance Schools Project, which linked the retail firm with the Fort Worth (Texas) Independent School District. The company aimed to help the district along in its site-based management work by sharing its corporate experiences with decentralization. In so doing, the people who worked for the company also learned more, personally and professionally, about what schools face and

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— Michael G. Fullan

need to know and be able to do to decentralize *their* operations.

The Business of Site-Based Management

A point of entry more commonly noted for site-based management work involves changes in the governance structure. Whether a site begins here or not, the "business" of site-based management will require attention to the logistics of collaborative work, which raises a myriad of questions, such as:

- Should we begin?
- Should we vote, or reach consensus?
- What is consensus?
- How do we know when we have it?
- What type of site-based council should we have?
- When should they meet?
- How can we give them time to meet?
- Where should they meet?
- Who should meet?
- What should they meet over?
- Should council members be selected? Elected?
- How many people should serve? Anybody who wants to? A predetermined number?
- How long a term should they serve?
- Should students serve?
- Should parents serve? Community members? Business leaders? How many and in what ratio to educators?
- Should teachers be in the majority?
- Should the principal be a member?
- Should the principal chair the committee?
- Should the principal have veto power? Over what issues?
- Should the councils have advisory and/or decision-making responsibilities? Over what matters?
- Should council members be compensated for their work? If so, how?

Answers to these and other questions could make or break a site-based management effort; they need to be attended to.

"Implementing this organizational philosophy," said Superintendent Mitchell, "takes time and energy. It is not easily implemented. Each school/unit must develop its own process for determining who makes what decisions."

The danger, however, is in letting these issues become the never-ending focus of attention. What is needed is to get to the heart of the matter: new roles and responsibilities for all key players and a renewed focus on staff development and accountability.

Reconceptualization

What is required and what is at stake when a school or district moves from an isolated to a collegial work environment? What roles need to change the most and how in the new style of play brought on by restructuring?

"The concept of role," a report on restructuring schools noted, "may be inappropriate for a job of this sort, for 'role' implies a patterned set of behaviors constructed to suit defined situations in organizations or social systems. It suggests regularity, predictability, and routinization. Hallmarks of bureaucratic organizations, these dimensions are anathema to restructuring schools."

The report by the National LEADership Network Study Group on Restructuring Schools further noted that:

> Instead of 'role,' we should perhaps be concerned with something on the order of *character*. It defines the whole person and the full measure of the professional undertaking, without the infirmities of listed qualities that miss the essence of the whole. Like other human endeavors that escape precise measurement — parenting, artistic performance, or generalship — leadership of the sort needed for restructuring schools is best defined by a set of gyroscopic forces through which the improving school and its changing environment are kept in harmony.

Day-to-Day Responsibilities

In the case of decentralization in Louisville's Jefferson County public school system, the artistry of site-based management required looking not only at the big picture, but also at the day-to-day activities and relationships that define a person's responsibilities.

Superintendent Donald W. Ingwerson, for example, recalled a time when his elementary school principals took him to task. They said: "You've been talking about success, and you're saying you want schools to look like the people in them. And yet we as administrators are all locked in. What's good for one school principal is good for the other ones. We'd like to change that... We want to work for the policy maker."

"Let's cut through the red tape," Ingwerson answered. "What you're saying is you want to work for me because I'm the superintendent and I'm the policy maker and you want me to supervise 88 principals, handle all the parent calls, handle all the books that don't arrive, handle all the broken chairs, all the broken windows. How could that possibly work?"

"Their question back to me," Ingwerson said, "was quick and sure: 'Would you like a little help?' I said I would, and in two weeks they brought me back a plan that has worked for six years."

The principals asked for the telephone numbers of people at the district level responsible for such things as chairs, books, broken windows, buses, and parent complaints. Calling these people "lightning rod" contacts, the principals said they wanted "to make one to two phone calls and no more. If we have a problem in a school, we'd like to make one call to the person in charge of that area. If that person handles the problem, we don't do anything else. If the person doesn't, we make the second call to your office and then it's your problem."

"I don't get many calls," Ingwerson said. "In the six years I think I can probably count them pretty readily. And yet we cut out several layers of folks: a deputy superintendent, five level directors or executive directors, secretarial staff and many other assistants. That money went right back into the schools. It's a basic idea, one that patterns itself after business, one that is making our school district work in a very effective way."

The Ingwerson example illustrates that to be effective, site-based management requires new roles. Teachers become leaders; leaders become teachers; educators become learners; parents become players; central office administrators become facilitators; and school board members become responsible for setting broad policies, as opposed to micromanaging school affairs.

Adjusting Management Styles

Since the passage of the historic Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, superintendents are "learning to lead from the background rather than from the apex of the organization," wrote Joseph Murphy of Vanderbilt University in reporting on a study of superintendents conducted by the National Center for Educational Leadership (a collaboration of Harvard, Vanderbilt, and the University of Chicago).

According to Murphy, superintendents "saw themselves as managing more by consensus than by command and as facilitating rather than controlling. They reported adjusting their management style to accommodate site-based decision making, a situation in which they no longer had the final say."

In Fort Worth, school-based management requires principals to be the primary leaders or managers of their schools. The process also requires the creation of school-based management teams, which empower teachers, staff, parents, students, and community members to make significant instructional and noninstructional decisions that affect their schools.

School board members talk about filtering parent complaints back to the schoolhouse, about a system for approving waivers that allow school-based personnel to break with district policy to better meet the needs of students, and about valuing "brave souls" willing to focus more on implementing sound instructional policies than on raising standardized test scores. As one school board member said: "Some administrators believe more in test scores than we do."

The Central Office Role

Administrators, for their part, talk about playing a support role: not to tell school people what they must or must not do, but to help them think through the strategies and resources they need to accomplish what they set out to do. "We at the central office realize our effectiveness and existence depend on serving the school," an associate superintendent said.

But what that means is not always clear. As one area district administrator said: "Our role is to support and encourage. I'm struggling with what support is, but that is our role." Some administrators proposed that eventually the district should operate like a

Getting Down to Business: The Logistics of SBM

How are decisions to be made? Who will be involved? What process is to be used? These and other questions surface quickly in the effort to forge collaborative work environments. In his book, *Renewing America's Schools: A Guide for School-Based Action,* Carl D. Glickman, director of the League of Professional Schools, offered a host of ideas and thoughts for the nuts and bolts of democratic governance.

- **Membership on school-governance groups** — At the minimum, a school needs to start with a majority of school faculty and the principal, with active solicitation of paraprofessionals, students, parents, community members, and district personnel on particular issues. Eventually, a school's governance should include representatives of all the school's various constituencies.
- **Governing conditions** — The norm should be one person, one vote; no individual should have ultimate veto power. A decision-making rule should be in place that finalizes decisions; the body at large should be responsible for ratification of the process, structure, and decision making.
- **Decision-making rule** — Simple majority. Two-thirds vote. Eighty percent. Consensus. What is best? Each school must decide. A rule of thumb: Select a decision-making rule that allows for a majority opinion and gives everyone the opportunity to participate, be heard, and influence the decision.
- **Picking a form of democracy** — A *representative* form means that members either volunteer or are elected to represent their constituents. *Direct participation* means that the "people" do not turn their "say" over to anyone, but keep it for themselves. All who wish to participate are invited to do so, as in the town meeting approach. A common *hybrid model* holds that a representative governing council will identify priorities, establish task forces, and set timelines for recommendations, but final decisions will be put before the group as a whole.
- **Finding time** — Reframe the question so the answer is not: "We don't have time." Ask: "With the time we have, at what level do we begin?"
- **Write a constitution?** Some school organizations resist structures, preferring to convene informally and make decisions as they go. However, perceptions may vary dramatically, from those who believe decisions are made by consensus to those who believe a small group of teachers and parents manipulates the decisions. Then a formal constitution helps to head off the perception that the informal process is not working.
- **Critical-study process** — Studying a school is part of taking action in that school. So, too, is bringing into the school "outside information" gleaned from such activities as visiting other schools; inviting in credible experts; attending conferences; and, when educators pursue graduate degrees, taking courses that relate to identified schoolhouse needs.

A Test for SBM

One way to assess the authenticity of site-based management is to see how successful it is in asking and answering these questions:

- What can be done to increase the sense of kinship, neighborliness, and collegiality among the faculty of a school?
- How can the faculty become more of a professional community where everyone cares about each other and helps each other to be, to learn together, and to lead together?
- What kinds of relationships need to be cultivated with parents that will enable them to be included in this emerging community?
- How can the webs of relationships that exist among teachers and between teachers and students be defined so that they embody community?
- How can teaching and learning settings be arranged so that they are more family-like?
- How can the school itself, as a collection of families, be more like a neighborhood?

Leadership for Restructuring Schools

Schools in the process of restructuring are "inspired by a new mission and vision of what is possible, of what is imperative, in American education and by the determination to invent new ways to achieve it."

So states a report prepared by the National LEADership Network Study Group on Restructuring Schools. A special edition of their report, "Developing Leaders for Restructuring Schools: New Habits of Mind and Heart," was reprinted by AASA in 1993.

Noting there is "no one right way for schools to restructure," the study group found three elements considered to be essential in "distinguishing restructuring schools from incrementally improving schools." Those elements were: "reinvigorated programs and services, expanded roles and responsibilities, reconstituted rules and regularities, and reconceptualized accountability."

Leaders of restructuring schools, the study group found:

- **Create dissonance** in their constant reminders to staff and others of the gap between vision and reality.
- **Prepare for and create opportunities** that move the school closer to the accomplishment of its mission.
- **Forge connections and create interdependencies** by skillfully creating interdependencies that lead to a consensus for understanding and action.
- **Encourage risk taking** by creating environments and conditions that allow a comfort with making mistakes and learning from them.
- **Follow as well as lead** by leading through service, rather than position.
- **Use information,** both research and practice, to guide innovation and change, to create new ways to think about and measure the growth and productivity of learners and the learning process, and to monitor and document the implementation process.
- **Foster the long view** by working incrementally within a comprehensive design of restructuring guided by a vision of learners and learning and by knowing when and how to delay judgment, tolerate and learn from interim setbacks, and invest for long-term yields.
- **Acquire resources**, finding flexible assistance through competitive grants and support from business and community organizations.
- **Negotiate for win-win outcomes** using collaborative bargaining to forge new professional agreements dealing with the teaching and learning process.
- **Employ change strategies** configuring the right mix of strategies and tactics to keep new undertakings on track through all stages of the improvement effort.
- **Provide stability in change** so that people can experiment with new ideas, take risks, and dismantle some aspects of the organization without losing a sense of the overall framework in which they are working.
- **Let people grow while getting the work accomplished**, recognizing that staff development is only one means of training people; often the most powerful learning is accomplished while meaningful work is being done.

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Often, it seems an 'illusion of inclusion.' On a particular issue — such as a four-period day — we keep voting it down. But it keeps coming up for a vote!

— English teacher,
Carroll County, MD

market economy under which schools would receive money to set their own budgets, determine their needs, and "buy" from a list of services provided by the central office or other sources.

For example, the central office, they said, could provide support by bringing objectivity and an "outside view" to the task at hand; by conducting bibliography and literature searches on key instructional issues; by helping to write grants; and by finding ways to help principals and teachers emulate the successes of others and learn from their mistakes.

As one principal noted: "I need ideas, people to help me think through the things I want to do, and tell me where to go to get what I want. Someone who can tell me, 'here's the latest research, something to think about, and here's where you can go to find the money.' There are things I know I'm doing that are wrong, but I don't know how to change them, what to do instead, and I [need] assistance to do that."

Teachers and administrators generally [enter] the field of education for the same reason: they [want] to work to improve the lives and the life prospects of children.

What About School Boards?

In the nation's decade-long push for education reform in which the roles and relationships of every practice, program, and player have been studied and debated, school boards cannot be exempt.

A report from the Twentieth Century Fund-Danforth Foundation Task Force on School Governance ("Facing the Challenge") and a follow-up report from the Institute for Educational Leadership ("Governing Public Schools") find that boards spend too much time "micromanaging" district affairs. Too often, said Michael W. Kirst, executive director of the task force and co-author of the IEL report, boards are "a collection of individual agendas rather than a collective vision for school improvement."

Kirst and his colleagues recommended that, in most cases, states rewrite statutes for school boards, transforming them into "local education policy boards" that would concentrate less on administration and more on policy.

For example, boards would engage in strategic planning, convene community forums on major educational issues, authorize and appoint citizen/consultant study groups, and formulate policies for school-based management and school-site budget control, periodically reviewing a school's ability to meet district and site goals.

A New Look at Unionism

Another major area for change is in labor-management relations. Typically lost in the adversarial labor negotiations of *industrial unionism*, said Julia Koppich of the University of California, Berkeley, is the opportunity for teachers and administrators "to explore their mutual professional values, goals, and expectations."

"Teachers and administrators generally [enter] the field of education for the same reason: they [want] to work to improve the lives and the life prospects of children. Somehow this mutual thread [gets] lost in the rough and tumble of collective bargaining and contract enforcement," she added.

Koppich and her colleagues involved in the Claremont Graduate School's Project VISION, a two-year study of more than a dozen school districts that explores school reform through labor relations, found that "districts seeking to transform themselves were also transforming labor-management interactions; they were, in effect, inventing *professional unionism.*"

In professional unionism, union and management assume joint custody of reform structures and procedures, collaboration replaces conflict, and a concern for the public interest links union strength with professional responsibility.

As Cincinnati union president Tom Mooney is quoted as saying: "Some teachers still feel they have not received all they can from bargaining unless the union publicly bashes the district and school board."

Koppich notes four precursors to professional unionism:

- Believing that change is required, not optional.
- Developing strategies to hold both internal and external politics at bay.
- Moving beyond anger to productive labor-management relations.
- Believing in the necessity for an expanded professional role for teachers.

"Professional unionism is about a new way of doing business," Koppich said. "Ownership of change is shared. Policy bargaining begins to replace a focus on self-interest and self-protection. Most significantly, perhaps, the public interest — what is good for students — comes to the fore."

A Laboratory Climate

In site-based management, roles change not only within groups but between groups. If schools are to become learning communities for both students *and* adults, then professionals need to find a way, as Roland S. Barth put it, "to create for oneself a climate of continuous experimentation and inquiry, a climate akin to that of a lab school, where every practice is tentative and under scrutiny."

Barth, founder and project director of the National Network of Principals' Centers, noted that if teachers are deputized as change agents, "they are likely to look at a lot of the routine and say, 'We can do better than this.' If they are not deputized as change agents, they're going to look at a lot of what is going on and they're going to say, 'I don't like this but I'm going to do it another 14 years and then I can retire.' So some kind of investment in teachers as culture builders makes a difference."

One of the most essential roles for teachers is to engage in what is frequently called "action research." The ASCD Teacher Leadership Network, founded in the recognition that "restructuring has redefined the forms of decision making within schools throughout the nation," notes that "teachers are involved in action research on a daily basis when they try something new in their classrooms, evaluate their results, and monitor and adjust their teaching to reflect what they have learned from their action research."

The Importance of Sharing

"Unfortunately," the group adds, "many teachers do not take the time to share their results with colleagues, but work in isolation within their own classrooms." What is needed instead is for teacher leaders to "conduct action research on a regular basis and find ways to share their results, brainstorm, and modify their teaching as a result of interaction with their students, supervisors, and colleagues."

Through the Teacher Leadership Strand of the Puget Sound Educational Consortium, for example, teachers from 14 school districts, with faculty and staff of the University of Washington, conducted a variety of research projects, leadership skills, experimented with a variety of experiential education projects [such as Eliot Wigginton's Foxfire model], and explored issues related to teacher leadership and the improvement of public education.

A second technical report prepared by the group noted that "over 20 years ago, Robert Schaefer, in writing about *The School as the Center of Inquiry*, argued that scholar-teachers linked to local universities should become research teachers, conducting systematic investigations into classroom processes. More recently, it has been recognized that the school become the center of inquiry when teams of researching scholar-teachers work together in collaborative inquiry."

To illustrate, in their study of decision-making structures in four schools with shared leadership, the Puget Sound teacher-researchers gathered data, developed focused interview questions, and collected and reviewed pertinent documents. Teams of three teachers spent one day at each of the four sites and then met to triangulate their data. Main themes emerged from which priorities were identified and compared to four models of shared leadership.

The report notes that "when teacher leaders work together in collaboration, they need a process framework to structure their activities. Action research provides this framework."

Patience, Patience, Patience

In summary, authentic site-based management is about creating learning communities for students *and* adults; for turning schools into places of inquiry, where professionals in partnership with lay and community people, and facilitated by leaders with vision, re-examine their practices and ideas about education.

"Perhaps one lesson for schools about to embark on a similar transition is: Be patient. Don't expect shared decision making to lead to speedy change," said Carol H. Weiss, who, in her work with the National Center for Educational Leadership, studied 12 schools, six of which had instituted shared decision-making structures.

"The standard advice to principals starting SDM," she added, "is to shift from being a doer and a manager to becoming a facilitator and enabler. On the basis of our evidence, that doesn't sound like advice best calculated to reform.

"The successful reformers among our principals were those who plugged away, reminding, prodding, raising suggestions, lobbying among teachers, securing outside resources, holding workshops, getting release time for teachers to work together, bringing in information from other schools, but always keeping the reform vision in the sight of all."

Preparedness

Changing roles and taking on new leadership responsibilities is about rethinking the character and nature of work — and attitudes toward it. Training is necessary to build the talent and resolve needed to challenge traditional assumptions and to build new habits of heart and mind.

According to Stephen R. Covey, character is a composite of habits, defined as the intersection of *knowledge, skill,* and *desire*. "Knowledge," Covey said, "is the theoretical paradigm, the *what to do* and the *why*. Skill is the *how* to do. And desire is the motivation, the *want to do*. In order to make something a habit in our lives, we have to have all three."

In the private sector, said Priscilla Wohlstetter and Susan Albers Mohrman in a finance brief published by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), three kinds of skills are important to decentralized management:

- Training to expand job skills and increase the breadth of perspective.
- Teamwork skills to be more effective in high-involvement management.
- Organizational knowledge, which includes budgeting, personnel, and change management skills.

"School districts under SBM have given at least some attention to the first two areas," according to Wohlstetter and Mohrman, drawing on their national study of school-based management for the CPRE Finance Center. But while districts routinely offer some training on how to organize meetings and how to develop consensus, and pay some attention to teaching, learning, and curriculum, the efforts are much less than needed. Even less has been done to develop general organizational skills, the researchers added, and training for district office personnel is also lacking.

The Need for Training

In the AASA survey on site-based management, respondents stressed the need for training in time management, conflict resolution, alternatives for leadership restructuring, and ways to find, collect, and use data. Training was most often cited as being provided in teamwork, problem solving, decision making, and communication skills, as well as alternatives for curriculum and instruction.

In some places, district offices provide training and consulting services to schools. Some sites (such as Chicago and Edmonton, Alberta) purchase staff development services from experts outside the district. Other sites offer training that is planned and delivered by teachers for teachers, such as the Dade Academy for the Teaching Arts in Florida. However it is delivered, the aim needs to be to help people succeed in roles that they may not have been educated to fill, or even expected to fill throughout their careers.

Speaking from the field, union representative Michael Schoeppach of Bellevue, Washington, says teacher training must take a new tack. "Teachers' training has got to move to an interdependence with colleagues," he said. "Otherwise, these schools are pockets of isolation — and it's not about running the schools. It's how to organize instruction to support kids' learning."

Abandon Old Models

In developing training programs, Ingwerson suggests a departure from old patterns, such as:

- **The deficit model**, in which individuals need fixing. People are not the problem, but the solution.
- **The one-shot workshop**, in which presentations are made without any input from the audience.
- **Training that is planned and prescribed by others**, in which prescriptions are delivered to you, at you, with no chance for personalization.
- **Training that lacks a support system for change**, which leads people to get burned out, frustrated, and unwilling to take the risk to see change through.

"You have to look at [training] not as an event, but as a whole scheme of events that go on and on and on," Ingwerson concluded. Moreover, he added, "if people are working on real problems, honest problems, then they begin to say, 'We have to do this.'"

Accountability

Site-based management is about trusting the people closest to the students to make the key decisions concerning what they will learn, how, and in which time frames and settings. So who is to blame if those decisions are not right? How do you know if they are not right? If I give up my "power," why should I be held accountable? If I get more "power," will I get more pay? Is sticking my neck out worth the risk of getting blamed?

The superintendent, moreover, has a unique stake in the system. "One of the issues I have with site-based management is the way school systems are set up," said Jamie Sovedoff, who took over as superintendent in the Montgomery Township schools. "Who has the ultimate responsibility and accountability? A school district that hires the superintendent holds the superintendent responsible for the achievement and performance of the teachers and students. It's the superintendent who has to report in to the school board and account for all the concerns that it has."

All of these are among the personal accountability issues raised in the messy work of forging democratic, collaborative work environments.

But site-based management also is about institutional reform. As a political reform — that which is mandated as an administration's "key agenda item" — the pressure is great to evaluate site-based management according to what gains and losses can be documented in one or two or three years' time.

While higher test scores, lower dropout rates, and greater student achievement are laudable goals for an education reform initiative, these may not be the proper barometers for evaluating site-based management, particularly in the early years of implementation and development.

Moreover, clear connections between certain efforts and certain results often are difficult to make. Who is to say, for example, that rising test scores are the result of site-based management and not the result of integrating academic and vocational education studies?

New Assessments Needed

What is needed, then, is to establish a list of benchmarks to determine progress from one point to the next, and not to rely solely on cause-and-effect results. The Sarasota, Florida, public school district, for example, uses a team character inventory of 37 items to help assess the effectiveness of school-based management and shared decision-making teams.

> So who is to blame if those decisions are not right? How do you know if they are not right? If I give up my "power," why should I be held accountable?

The inventory analyzes the character of teams according to such things as team goals and objectives, role clarity, structure, communications, leadership, feedback, rewards, control, flexibility, mutual trust and confidence, relationships, meetings, problem resolution, and effectiveness.

Companies moving into quality management practices also are learning that it is imperative — but difficult — to think beyond typical bottom-line assessments.

Ned Johnson, chairman of Fidelity Investments, said that while "the basis for all quality processes is a sound system of measurement," achieving that measurement is a lot easier said than done. In reflecting on his company's huge investment in technology, Johnson added: "At any point in time, we could be spending too much — or not enough. Measuring the end result is not easy because the improvements often are in terms of better service, more accurate numbers, or making a person's job more interesting and less repetitive. There are a lot of benefits, but measuring all of them effectively is difficult, to put it mildly."

A Circular Approach

If school renewal, like quality management, is about continual improvement, then assessment requires a circular, and not a linear, approach.

That is why the late W. Edwards Deming, father of the quality movement, introduced the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle to the Japanese years ago. The PDCA cycle, as described by Mary Walton in her book, *Deming Management at Work*, has four stages: "Briefly, a company plans a change, does it, checks the results and, depending on the results, acts either to standardize the change or to begin the cycle of improvement again with new information."

Regardless of the difficulties inherent in assessment, site-based management — in that it affects the personal, interpersonal, managerial, and organizational life of a culture, and in that it requires great time, energy, and resources for education, training, and outreach — needs to be evaluated.

If, as is generally believed, the only true measure of successful site-based management is making learning richer for both the students and adults in a school, then the following points are salient: keep the reform in perspective, honor the time commitment, determine your viewpoint, and carefully consider assessment options.

Keep the Reform in Perspective

In the final analysis, site-based management as discussed in this book is a means to an end; it is a tool, or a framework, for running a school and for listening and relating to colleagues and their interests, to students and their families, to communities and their concerns.

School-based management is not about decreasing the dropout rate, raising the graduation rate, and improving test scores; it's about modeling the skills and attitudes we want our young people to bring to their jobs, their relationships, and their civic responsibilities.

By definition, any effort to improve how a district manages itself must be evaluated on what is traditionally viewed as "soft" data: how do people feel, care about, and express their attitudes about change, and how does this translate into new behaviors. But not everyone has an easy time with this.

As one district administrator in the research and evaluation office of a Texas school district noted: "Testimonial, anecdotal evidence is the main thing you're going to have. My problem with that is people may gloss over things and make it seem like more happened than did. That's my own bias toward anecdotal evidence, but that's all we have."

Honor the Time Commitment

In the early stages of reform, as a culture strives to redefine itself, a focus on ends without attention to process can derail even the best-laid plans. Likewise, a focus on ends without attention to process can lead to hollow change: all talk, no action, and a great waste of time and energy.

Determine Your Viewpoint

In judging how well site-based management is working, ask, *What do I want to assess? It may not be "student achievement," but such things as:*

- Is better data and research being generated and used in determining what to teach kids and how? Who participates in the research? Who reflects upon it? What results?
- Are more groups represented in the decision-making process and are they making better decisions?
- What kinds of decisions are teachers, principals, and other site-based staff making and are they key? What effect does this have on their morale? Their creativity? Their willingness to "think outside the box?"
- What effect do these decisions have on students? Their school environment? Their studies? Their relationships with teachers, peers, and studies?
- Are communities becoming more sensitized to the difficulties inherent in carrying out the mission that all kids — and not just my kid — will learn?
- Is the central office in the business of helping school-based staff get the resources they need to do the jobs *they* say they need to do, even if that means creating a district of distinct schools? What kind of resources do they provide? What kind of support? What kind of feedback? What kind of oversight?
- Has an effort been made to tap into community resources? Who brokers the resources? Who facilitates the effort?
- Through the process and exercise of SBM, are we able to identify and attend to key restructuring issues that before we had been blind to, apathetic about, or simply

too burdened to address? Do we not only see the problems, but the possibilities?

- Are people talking together more, sharing ideas and strategies? Are teachers less isolated in their classrooms and more forthcoming in sharing their expertise and experiences?
- Is there a place for group improvement in a system that heretofore rewarded individual effort?

Consider Assessment Options

What is sometimes considered "soft data" might indeed be "hard data" in the assessment of a reform that has as much to do with changing attitudes and beliefs as it does with establishing new structures and approaches. Evidence gleaned through such activities as interviews, surveys, questionnaires, observation, and focus groups, often are used to answer the critical questions associated with school-based management.

"For a school to capture the sense of school renewal," Carl Glickman said, "it needs to develop the critical-study process, so that information infuses the raising and studying of important questions about student learning."

What data might a school collect? Glickman distinguished between data from *conventional sources* — available at virtually every school, such as attendance rates, dropout rates, discipline referrals, and test scores; *additional sources* — most schools could easily acquire, such as a sampling of student writings over time and attitude surveys of students, faculty, parents, and other community members; and *creative sources* — not yet routinely developed and used, such as student portfolios, filming a student's performance, interviews, and activities that simulate real-life activities.

In his book, *Renewing America's Schools*, Glickman offers a series of caveats for the critical-study process:

1. Begin by looking at existing data, and decide what other data are needed.
2. Do not hesitate to act, but, when acting, figure out how to study the action.
3. Whenever possible, use existing resources within the school, district, and community to collect, analyze, and interpret data, and use students as producers of knowledge.
4. Keep the critical-study process consistent with other agencies' requirements for school improvement.

Is It Worth Pursuing?

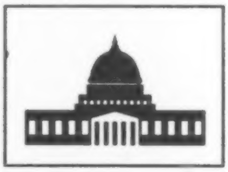
Site-based management and shared decision making has to be evaluated as a way of work that makes sense into the 21st Century. "If shared decision making enhances [teachers'] professional status and their responsibility to meet the needs of students, and if it increases their commitment to decisions that are made in the school (and it does), then SDM is worth pursuing in its own right," Carol Weiss of Harvard University said.

"Most teachers," she added, "may neglect SDM for a long while; many will use it to delay changes that complicate their work lives; SDM may not accomplish much in many places for an extended period of time. Still, if there, it provides the opportunity (as all democratic governmental structures do) for teachers and administrators to grab hold of the reins and direct the school toward important change."

SDM, Weiss continued, "will take resources . . . it will take training and ongoing education for school staffs; it will require leadership. But SDM has such intrinsic appeal that we should be very wary about the criteria we use to evaluate it, and the grounds on which we make decisions about whether to end or continue it."

The View from Washington

The General Accounting Office launched a study of school-based management in 1992 at the request of the U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. It selected three school districts to study — Dade County, Florida; Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; and Prince William County, Virginia — based upon their years of experience with the program and budgetary commitment to it. The report, published in the summer of 1994, did not unearth anything



not covered elsewhere in this book. But for the edification of the senators who requested the study, it described many things SBM accomplishes, and some things it does not.

Overall, the report pointed out, school-based management resulted in two major areas of change: instruction and budgeting.

Changes in Instruction

Under SBM, the report said, school administrators and teachers made a wide variety of changes in their schools' instructional programs. It was not so much that SBM caused schools to make changes, but rather "gave them permission to make changes and deviate from district policy."

These changes varied from those affecting only a part of the school population — like adding new courses — to those affecting the entire school — like adopting an ungraded primary system or schools-within-a-school. In some cases, the changes required waivers from district or union regulations.

For example, faced with declining enrollment, a high school in Edmonton changed its instructional program from one emphasizing vocational education to one that emphasized performing arts — and sold the shop tools to outfit the performing arts studio. Some Prince William County schools adopted extended-day programs, which were not available before because the school board would not fund after-school bus service. Under SBM, decisions on bus service are up to each school, many of which opted for extended-day programs.

The GAO report made a point of noting that the motivation for some of the changes was not entirely academic. "Under SBM, adding new courses was motivated, in part, by the greater competition among departments to attract students," the report quoted a Prince William administrator. "Attracting more students allows a department to hire more teachers and get more funding for supplies and equipment."

Changes in Budgeting

Since SBM allowed schools to make their own budgeting decisions, the report noted, some schools increased their instructional spending while others put more money into administration. Some schools budgeted more for some types of staff and less for other purposes, including equipment replacement or supplies. Other schools reduced staff spending to fund special projects, such as computer labs or media center technology.

Many of the changes, as in instruction, required district and union waivers. For example, in Edmonton, one school chose to increase class size to save money in teacher salaries and used that money — totaling $500,000 over the years — to buy computers. A companion school chose to emphasize smaller classes and thus has spent about $10,000 on computer equipment.

Since SBM allowed schools to make their own budgeting decisions, some schools increased their instructional spending while others put more money into administration.

Another word of caution. While SBM allows schools to shift money around, the report said, "schools' budgets did not realize savings."

What About Achievement?

One thing the GAO could not find in its study was an indication of whether SBM will result in improved student performance. One reason was that the necessary data was not available. Another was that instruction was not always the number one priority.

"Administrators and teachers in some schools had difficulty focusing on improving their instructional programs because of their preoccupation with issues of school governance," the report said, attributing such observations to unnamed "district and school staff."

"Power struggles ensued in some schools while SBM was implemented. . . . Some principals did not want to share power with teachers, and some teachers sought to take power away from their principals."

The district's progress with SBM, the report noted, depends on the principal of a given school. "The key issue is whether principals know about the instructional process," the report quoted a district official. "Principals that do not are still doing the same things that they did before SBM."

In Conclusion . . .

Site-based management, as seen in this section and throughout this book, is about changing the organizational and instructional systems of schools and districts by focusing on unique schoolhouse talents and specific student needs.

It is about strategic planning, management, leadership, teaching, learning, training, budgeting, school climate, school culture, accountability, and parental and community involvement. It also is about inner convictions and trust, and about modeling for students leadership, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills.

It is an area in which, to borrow Deming's words, "best efforts and hard work will not suffice." There is, as Deming said, "no substitute for knowledge."

Managing Transitions: 'Getting Them Through the Wilderness'

Institutional changes are often planned and managed with considerable skill, at least in their financial and technical aspects. Too often overlooked, however, are "the human transitions that accompany these changes — the psychological processes that people go through to reorient themselves."

As William Bridges saw it in the Fall 1988 *New Management*, there are many tales of leaders who have played vital roles in planning and executing organizational changes, "but there are fewer tales of leaders who have successfully managed transitions."

He speaks of one: Moses, who, in leading the people of Israel out of Egypt, through the wilderness and to the Promised Land, found that it is difficult to break a system's hold on people. The example of Moses offers insights for managing transitions. Bridges noted, for example, that today's leaders need to:

- Up the ante until the old order begins to coincide with the necessities of creating a new one.
- Protect people from the full impact of "plagues," handling matters in such a way that the destruction of the old system does not damage the elements from which the new system is to be built.
- Remember that it is always easier to take the people out of Egypt (the old system) than to take the old system out of the people.
- Realize that the Promised Land takes a long, long time to reach, so it is necessary to find areas where it is possible to push toward quick and sure successes, even if it takes more resources than the importance of the success might otherwise justify. Paradoxically, however, quick successes need to be part of a plan that ensures a slow journey through the wilderness.
- Be careful that in breaking power centers of the old order and dismantling systems that made the old way work not to denigrate the past. People's identities are too tied up in the past to reject it out of hand.
- Understand that the power to get people through the wilderness lies not in the leader but in the vision.
- Realize the importance of communication. Convey your vision to the people a little bit at a time, never pretending to understand more than you feel. And don't depend on official pronouncements; spend a great deal of time wandering around, talking informally to people.

"In the modern wilderness of an organization in transition," Bridges noted, "communication must be constant and multiform. Videotaped messages, site visits, ceremonies, logos and mottoes, backstairs conversations, and little symbolic acts are worth 50 times their weight in memos."

The JCPenney High Performance Schools Project

Before a person can manage change, a person has to accept change. And before a company or an institution can reflect change, a critical mass of support has to build from within.

To aid that effort in the Fort Worth (Texas) Independent School District, JCPenney funded a two-year pilot project to help school officials build the capacity for change among not only teachers, principals, staff, and administrators, but also among students, parents, and civic, business, and community representatives.

The National Alliance of Business was contracted to oversee the planning and implementation of the $388,000 grant. Among other things, the JCPenney grant funded a series of leadership institutes for principals, school-based management teams, and district administrators; two central office retreats; team development and effectiveness training for parents, teachers, principals, and community representatives; and competitive mini-grants at 10 schools to test the power of site-based management and decision making in practical applications to specific schoolhouse needs.

David H. Lenz, then the manager of public affairs for JCPenney, explained, "We had something very important to offer, which is the knowledge of site-based management, because that's the way we manage our company. Each store serves a different community, and in that community you have different ethnic, cultural, and economic groups. There's no way a corporate office in Dallas can determine each community's customer needs and wants, so you best rely on the person who's facing that customer you're trying to serve."

Reflecting the Business of Schooling, a report based on the initiative, highlighted in great detail 10 lessons learned. A quick review of those lessons is offered here:

Lesson No. 1: *Create a Project Planning Team to oversee project activities. Represent all key functions engaged in implementing school-based management. Encourage the business partner to serve on the team.*

The team advances the vision, assesses training needs, oversees project activities, and evaluates and sustains the change effort. Its members also need to bring to the table an understanding of how the district functions and its political and organizational dynamics, key undergirding of any successful project.

Lesson No. 2: *Customize project activities to meet individual school and school district needs. Remain flexible so that emerging issues can be addressed.*

Although a project may have a finite beginning and ending, hopefully the initiatives it precipitates will grow and flourish. Those involved in the project should have a clear reading on its potential education partners, internal and external.

Lesson No. 3: *Agree up front on appropriate evaluation criteria to guide expectations and assess progress.*

Such criteria will help the education partner identify success stories on which to build once the project has ended and help the partner target subsequent investments and involvements.

Lesson No. 4: *Target substantial resources on professional development. Use training funds strategically, to address skill needs related to collaborative decision making at all system levels.*

Educators at all levels need to develop the requisite skills to adopt and adapt to their new roles. Training, though, must be an ongoing effort to help people develop more advanced skills and to offset the setbacks that can result when key participants trade one school setting or responsibility for another, an occupational hazard in education.

Lesson No. 5: *Provide opportunities for school-based staff to apply newly learned skills and to take risks.*

The bottom line of any education reform effort has to be successful change in the schoolhouse and in the classroom. JCPenney incentive grants, awarded to 10 schools, helped energize effective teams of

(continued on next page.)

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A Business-School Partnership, Contd.

faculty, principals, and parents to push for greater gains, more grants, more collaborative teamwork, more focus on the needs of children and their families.

Lesson No. 6: *Address change issues involving the relationship between the central office and with the schools.*

As the project progressed, it became increasingly clear that the greatest challenge to implementation of school-based management is in redefining the relationships between the central office and all the schools. Therefore, efforts to advance shared decision making must involve key central office staff whose job it is to support the schools.

Lesson No. 7: *Use the project as a catalyst for surfacing tough, but necessary change issues.*

There needs to be a strong commitment from the top that shared decision making will become the school district's standard operating procedure. District administrators, principals, teachers, students, parents, community leaders, and taxpayers must be able to see a vision of the future. But that vision is meaningless unless it is continually and passionately communicated throughout the district and becomes, as one Fort Worth school official calls it, a "quasi-religious experience."

Lesson No. 8: *Network business managers and education administrators on common organizational issues.*

During a planning meeting at JCPenney's home office, JCPenney managers talked about what they did in critical support functions, including strategic planning, human resource development, organizational planning and development, communications, budget planning, and community relations. Fort Worth administrators then selected three areas to pursue — training, telecommunications, and long-term strategic planning. The Planning Team also matched several store managers with principals in "job shadowing" activities, just to see what would happen. What evolved were some of the most rewarding experiences of the project.

Lesson No. 9: *Treat the project as "seed" money, the chance to build internal capacity and forge an effective business-education partnership. Craft dissemination strategies and next steps to reinforce innovation and sustain the partnership.*

Project partners need to look for ways to reinforce existing change efforts so that the innovation can help spark continuous improvement.

Lesson No. 10: *Turn inward: the most valuable resource of any business in supporting education improvement may be its own people.*

Finances are important, but educators need more than just money. They need ideas. They need examples of what works in different settings. They need training to apply new principles and skills. They need time off from their regular duties to reflect on these new ideas and to prepare to use them. And they need sanctions to take a risk — without fear of reprisals for failure. Schools need the latitude to try new things without losing that right as soon as something goes wrong.

In Closing . . .

The focus of this book has been to concentrate not only on the promise of site-based management and its role in school transformation, but also on the gains, perils, and pitfalls inherent in collaborative work environments, as noted by a wide range of researchers, practitioners, participants, trainers, and observers involved in the effort.

These were some of the major issues raised:

Issue No. 1: Site-based management is about embracing a new mindset.

Issue No. 2: Authentic and effective site-based management results from negotiating certain trends and issues as they apply to specific settings and situations.

Issue No. 3: There is no one model or one best way.

Issue No. 4: Based on a marketplace of ideas from a wide variety of sources, eight key points emerge that suggest criteria for authentic site-based management and for determining readiness to take on more decision-making responsibility at the site level. These are Commitment, Attitude, Purpose, Action, Leadership, Readiness, Character, and Steadfastness.

Issue No. 5: Under certain circumstances, it might be best not to consider site-based management.

Issue No. 6: Site-based management is not the "new kid on the block." It enjoys a rich heritage.

Issue No. 7: Site-based management could — and in most cases, should — result in "paradigm shifts" for "quantum change," taking "status" away from the status quo.

If the very bottom line of schooling is student learning, nobody — at least not yet — has drawn a direct correlation between site-based management and improved student achievement. Yet many promising results have emerged from successful efforts, and surely if learning environment has any value at all in education, is it possible to underrate the type of atmosphere described in this response to the AASA survey: "We have had so much fun sharing ideas, thoughts, and decisions. Morale is up. Teachers feel as though their ideas count. Ownership is wonderful!"

As far back as 1943, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development described educational leadership as being "synonymous with stimulating people to participate in planning, executing, and evaluating . . . experiences." The 1960 ASCD Yearbook emphasized that "all individuals and groups in the school and community have leadership potential that should be exercised."

Even today, nearly 35 years later, there are still many obstacles to be overcome before that creed can be translated into an effective model of site-based decision making, but considering the diversity in our nation's schools and student populations, it is time to start the journey.

It may not be easy. As a RAND report on decentralization noted: "Although school systems just entering site-based management might hope to learn from others' experience, most will be forced to find their own way."

The report added that these issues, primarily changes in roles, relationships, and responsibilities, "will be resolved over time by a combination of *practical experience* at the school and district level, by *research* that clarifies the issues and informs actors in one locality about the solutions devised elsewhere, and by *negotiation* among the affected parties."

This book, then, is offered to those who are practicing, or contemplating, school-based management in the hope that it will help them on their journey toward school renewal and the eventual transformation of curriculum and instruction for the 21st Century.

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